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JOHN CREASEY

A TOFF MYSTERY-SUSPENSE NOVEL

Call the Toff

A search for a missing widow leads the Toff into the heart of the illegal diamond trade!

Originally published in hardcover by Walker and Company

STRANGE WELCOME

Richard Rollison was pleased to escape the reporters who had come to meet him on the ship. A cool breeze was sweeping down off the mountain, as if to greet England's most famous amateur detective on his arrival in Capetown. He went through Customs and headed for a line of taxis, where a little redhaired man stepped forward, smiling.

"Mr. Rollison?"

"Which paper are you from?"

"None," he said. "The Cape Hotel asked me to come and meet you."

"Very kind of them," said the Toff. He climbed into the car and settled back for a ride. Soon they were away from the docks, and moving through busy streets. They grew ever more narrow, and he sat up, suddenly suspicious. The driver swung into an alley and slammed on the brakes, and Rollison was jarred forward. When he caught his balance, he found himself looking into the muzzle of a gun. . . .

Call the Toff

John Creasey

LANCER BOOKS NEW YORK

A LANCER BOOK

CALL THE TOFF

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Chapter I

STRANGE WELCOME

"Good morning, sir," said the steward.

Richard Rollison grunted.

"Five-thirty, sir." The steward's voice was gentle but insistent. "Your tea's here."

"Go away," grunted Rollison.

"It's half-past five, sir. We're approaching Cape Town. It will look wonderful in the dawn."

Rollison sighed a deep sigh, and struggled up. Sleepiness and tousled hair could not conceal the strength of his handsome face, lean and tanned after the fourteen-day voyage from Southampton. He blinked, and his grey eyes glinted, suddenly steely and keen; then he yawned.

"Your tea, sir," said the steward.

"Yes, I know. And Cape Town's lovely in the dawn. Do you know what time I got to bed?"

"No, sir."

"Three-thirty."

"You'll be glad you got up, sir, afterwards." The steward left the cabin and Rollison sipped his tea, and tried to see out of the porthole. He couldn't.

Fifteen minutes later, dressed and shaved, he stood at the rails of the *Athol Castle* and watched the greyness of dawn turn to golden magnificence over the flat majesty of Table Mountain. Shadows chased each other down its sides, wisps of cloud drifted among the pine trees. Nearer, the docks looked busy and the white houses and tall buildings of the city grew clearer as the minutes passed.

Rollison watched, studied and marvelled—and wondered.

He had travelled six thousand miles to find a woman who lived somewhere in South Africa. He knew no more; except that she might be dead.

"Excuse me, sir," said the steward in the dining-saloon.

"Bacon and three eggs," said Rollison firmly.

"Yes, sir. The Press——"

"Press?"

"Newspapers."

"Oh, yes. What about them?"

"They'd like to see you, sir. The *Cape Argus* and *Die Komeet*. Do you mind which you see first?"

"Who got here first?"

"*Die Komeet.*"

"Sun deck, in twenty minutes," said Rollison.

He was nineteen minutes. The sun deck, scene of much sun-bathing and many midnight glimpses of the moon, was deserted—except for the girl. She was a little slip of a thing, wearing a wide-brimmed hat, with a handbag under her arm and she was looking at Table Mountain as if she had never before seen beauty like it.

Without speaking, Rollison went to the rail. He could see her profile—a nice profile. He liked the shape of her short nose and of her lips, and the cut of her chin; she had quite a figure, too.

She turned and smiled.

"Good morning, Mr. Rollison."

"Good Lord! Not *you.*"

She looked puzzled.

"I don't quite understand."

"You shouldn't do it. It's not a job for a woman. Shocking. Prying into people's secrets. Shameful!"

The girl laughed delightfully.

"I see what you mean. I don't want any secrets, though—just to know why you've come to South Africa."

"Oh, holiday. Idle rich. Didn't you know?"

"I knew *that.*" She had grey-green eyes with a sparkle, and her hair, rich auburn, was blowing a little in the

wind. "But Mr. Richard Rollison doesn't travel without a better reason than that."

"Is there a better?"

"Are you looking for anyone?" she asked bluntly.

"My dear young lady——"

She drew nearer; now they were very close.

"I know this will sound an old one to you, but I desperately need a good story. I wouldn't be here, but one of the reporters fell sick, and I persuaded the editor to send me. It——"

"Is your big chance," Rollison said gravely.

"It is, seriously. You're the biggest personality on board. There are all kinds of rumours floating about—in the Press world—I mean about why you've come. Everyone's guessing. England's greatest amateur detective is really *news*. Some people say you've come to look for a crook. Others say someone in South Africa has asked for your help, and you've come to investigate something locally. Which is it?"

"Holiday," said Rollison firmly.

"It's not, really. I don't believe——"

She looked so appealing and so grave that he almost relented. He could at least tell her that a man had been murdered in London, and had died with a woman's name on his lips—the woman he had come here to find. Then he laughed at his moment of near folly.

"The trouble is that someone has exaggerated my reputation," he said.

"I'm sure they haven't. Everyone had heard of the Toff, a long time before they knew you were coming to South Africa. You're famous——"

"Notorious," murmured Rollison.

"—all over the world," insisted the girl. "Why have you come?"

Rollison laughed. "Let's say I'm being hunted in England, and wanted a place of safety over here. That would be sensation enough, wouldn't it?"

"Would it be true?"

"No."

"Then I can't use it."

"Too bad," said Rollison. "I wish——"

He stopped, at a clatter of steps up a companionway. Two young men, one carrying a camera, burst on to the sun deck; the younger was fair-haired and excited. Both looked round, and one cried:

"There he is!"

"Mr. Rollison?" asked the other more calmly.

"Good morning."

"Good Lord!" exclaimed the fair-haired young man, looking at the girl. "What on earth are you doing here, Kath? I thought——" He broke off, looking ludicrously disappointed.

The girl was smiling, and no longer looked appealing.

"Hallo, Jim."

"Do you mean to say they've let *you* loose on Mr. Rollison?"

"They just let me loose." The girl smiled sweetly. "And we haven't quite finished, Bill; would you mind waiting?"

As she spoke, there was a bright flash—bright even against the early light of day. Rollison and the girl swung round. The photographer was looking bored.

"Can I take one more, sir?"

"Keep me out of this," said the girl hastily.

"It makes such a pretty picture," said the photographer. "What's the matter with your paper, can't it afford a camera?"

"Don't start a quarrel over me," pleaded Rollison. "Let me make a brief statement. I'm here on holiday because I've been overworking. I've never been to South Africa. I want to go down gold and diamond mines, I want to see whether the Cape is as beautiful as people say it is, whether it's true that all South African girls are lovely, and I hope to keep away from your policemen. That's about all."

Five minutes later the Afrikaaner photographer arrived; there were more flashes, of Rollison alone, then he left the reporters together and went slowly below to look after the formalities of immigration and Customs. He

couldn't get the girl's face out of his mind. He was inclined to believe that she had really needed a scoop. It was at least as likely that she might be a cunning little minx who'd hoped to woo the truth out of him. He'd nearly told her, too; it must be the effect of Table Mountain.

He went through Customs an hour later, looked up at the mountain—everyone off the ship was doing that—said good-bye to a dozen shipboard acquaintances and, with a coloured boy trundling a truck with his two cabin trunks and three suitcases, walked out to the yard. Dozens of people were gathered outside; there seemed to be hundreds of glistening American cars. A cool breeze swept down from the mountain.

No one now took any notice of Rollison, until he reached a row of taxis. A little man came forward, red-haired, smiling.

"Mr. Rollison?"

"Yes. Which newspaper?"

"Oh. I'm not the Press. The Cape Hotel asked me to come and meet you. We can put the heavy luggage in the van"—he pointed to an old-fashioned truck standing nearby, with CAPE HOTEL printed on it in large letters—"then we can take the small stuff with us."

"Very thoughtful of the hotel." said Rollison.

"We like to look after our guests, sir."

"Thanks." Rollison climbed into a huge American car, carrying only his brief-case. As he sank back in a corner he glanced at his watch; it was nearly nine, the formalities hadn't taken long. He lit a cigarette as the red-headed driver started off. After a long drive through the docks they stopped at a gate, where Rollison handed over the chits given him in the Customs shed. Once outside the gates, he began to feel that he was really in the Union; docks were docks, all the world over.

Soon they were in thick traffic, driving faster than he was used to in London, but the little red-headed man drove well. They turned left, along a narrow street with shops on either side and crowded pavements; practically

everyone was coloured. Not knowing the way to the hotel, Rollison thought nothing of that. They went down a wide street, where coloured children were playing or sitting at doorways; he noticed a cinema on a corner of the main road.

The next turning was much narrower.

"Won't be long, sir, this is a short cut," said the man with red hair.

"Oh. Thanks." Rollison tossed his cigarette stub out of the window and sat up. He couldn't explain why he didn't like this situation, but he didn't. The driver need not have explained; it was almost as if he were trying to quieten fears Rollison might have. The district was poor, Rollison didn't see a white face. The driver looked straight ahead of him, still driving fast.

They swung off the narrow street into one narrower, little more than an alley. It led uphill, and the car scorched round another corner, tires squealing, into a dead end. There was a grey wall in front of them, broken-down buildings on either side. The street was deserted. The buildings on both sides looked beyond human occupation.

The driver jammed on the brakes as the car reached the wall, and grinned one-sidedly at Rollison.

"A nice hotel," said Rollison softly.

"One of the best," said the red-head. "Take it easy, Mr. Rollison. A friend of mine wants a word with you. Just do what I say, and you'll be all right. You can get out now, but keep your hands in sight."

As he spoke he drew his own right hand from his pocket, then put it back again.

He carried a gun.

Rollison climbed slowly out of the car.

Chapter II

WARNING

Rollison, tall and lean, stood by the side of the car and looked down into the red-haired man's face. It was an attractive face. Weatherbeaten, wrinkled, with bright blue eyes, two-day stubble, full lips and quite a chin. He was dressed in a navy-blue suit and now wore a peaked cap. A man who could see a joke and who enjoyed playing one. His gun was still in his pocket, out of sight.

"Don't come any nearer, and get back. We're not going in here—this is only a rendezvous. Now relax. It's not every visitor from England who gets into District 6 so soon. You ought to feel at home."

"Why? Having a rogue for company?"

The man grinned.

"You're in the East End of Cape Town. That's your spiritual home in London, isn't it?"

"You've some queer ideas. Where's this man who wants to make a lot of trouble for himself?"

The red-haired man frowned.

"Don't get yourself mixed up, Rollison. This is new ground for you. If there's trouble, you'll be on the receiving end, you won't be handing it out. Just be patient—and take a tip from me. The man you're going to see is dangerous. And he's big. He has a lot of influence. Behave yourself with him."

"How long have you been on his pay-roll?"

"Long enough to know it doesn't pay to get in bad with him."

Rollison shrugged and put his hand to his pocket, for

his cigarettes. The other drew his gun half-way from his pocket and kept it there until Rollison had lit the cigarette. As an afterthought, Rollison held out his silver case. The red-head stretched out his hand for a cigarette, and as his fingers touched it, Rollison dropped the case. For a split second the red-head was off his guard. Rollison hit him with a single uppercut beneath the chin and rocked him back on his heels.

As he swayed, Rollison hooked his legs from under him, and before he hit the ground, pulled the gun out of his pocket.

Rollison stood back, leaning against the car, cigarette jutting out from his lips, eyes smiling, gun in hand. The red-head lay on the ground for a few seconds, then began to pick himself up. Blood trickled from the corner of his lips, and an ugly light shone in his blue eyes. He wiped his lips gingerly, and felt his chin; it was already swelling.

"Cigarette?" asked Rollison.

"I—I warned you."

"That's right." Rollison pointed. "Pick up my case, will you?"

The man hesitated, then obeyed, watching Rollison all the time. He didn't watch closely enough. Rollison moved, grabbed him by the collar of his coat and dipped a hand inside his breast pocket. He drew out a wallet. He released the man, backed to the car and examined the contents in the wallet. He used only half of his mind; the other half was on the alert for trouble from the derelict buildings flanking the narrow street.

None came, yet he felt he was being watched.

There were two letters, each addressed to J. O'Malley. He put the letters back and tossed the wallet; O'Malley caught it.

"It takes you a long time to pick up a few cigarettes," said Rollison.

"You—you don't know what you're doing. I've warned you. You'll be all right if you behave yourself, but if you start throwing your weight about, you'll be in trouble. District 6 is a hot spot. He could cut you up, and blame

one of the gangs. He's sending a messenger here; you'd better go where he wants you, and——"

"Give you back your gun?" suggested Rollison.

"Yes. Listen, *I* don't want you to get in any trouble, I'm just doing what I'm told. I can get you out of this, won't say anything about it. Take my advice, hand that gun over. Be sensible."

"I never could be sensible, it's one of my inherited misfortunes," said Rollison. "Turn round."

"Now, listen——"

"Turn round!"

O'Malley obeyed, slowly, reluctantly and tried to turn his head so that he could see Rollison all the time. He might have seen Rollison's hand move, but wasn't in time to stop the blow on the nape of the neck, from the butt of his own gun. He grunted and folded up. Rollison stopped him from falling, and carried him to the other side of the car, dumping him on the seat. Then Rollison took O'Malley's tie off, and fastened his hands in front of him; the red-head's head lolled, chin on chest. Rollison picked up his case and cigarettes, then took the wheel, but didn't start the engine. He lit another cigarette, kept the gun in his right-hand pocket and watched the driving mirror. Still the alley seemed uninhabited.

After five minutes or so a child turned into the street.

The child, a boy of ten or eleven, who came hurrying on his bare feet, was as black as coal and had a mop of frizzy black hair. His red shirt gaped open at the neck, and his khaki knickers came well below his knees. He made a bee-line for the car, and when he was out of range of the driving mirror Rollison turned to smile at him.

The black face and dark eyes looked puzzled. A worried gaze passed from Rollison to O'Malley and back.

"Looking for Mr. O'Malley?"

"Yes—yessah."

"He's not well. Give me the message, will you?"

The boy licked his lips.

"Yessah. Mr. O'Malley is to go to Mount Street, sah."

"Where's Mount Street?"

The boy turned, pointed and talked. Rollison quickly knew that the directions were so confused that he had little hope of following them. So he pulled O'Malley closer, and pointed to the space between him and the door. The boy's face lit up, and he hurried round and climbed in.

"Now listen carefully," said Rollison. "When we have to turn a corner, tell me which way. Say 'next right' or 'next left'. Understand?"

"Sure do, sah!"

"Off we go, then."

Rollison started the car cautiously; he wasn't used to the controls. He had to back out of the alley, and when he reached the corner the boy told him to turn right. They took several turnings. For all Rollison knew, they were going back to their starting-point. The streets and the coloured people looked all the same—except that in two streets most of the people wore red fezes and two or three of the women were dressed in saris. The boy sat on the edge of the seat, grinning as if his face would split in two and forgetting his instructions until they were at each corner where they had to turn. Then he shouted and pointed. Soon they crossed a main road, where there were buses. Rollison saw two men in blue walking along together. Policemen? He didn't know.

Anyone with sense would call them; he was a stranger in a strange town and knew a little of the reputation of District 6. He hardly glanced at the uniformed men, but turned into another narrow street. Ahead of them, Table Mountain seemed very near; trees and bushes on the lower slopes looked bright green in the sun.

"Are we nearly there?"

"Yes, sah. You turn left, next corner."

Rollison, much more familiar with the car now, swung left. He hadn't taken a wide enough swing. The road ahead was so steep the engine wouldn't take it in top gear. He changed down swiftly, but the engine stalled. He put on the handbrake, and looked reproachfully at the boy, whose grin was seraphic, almost exalted.

"Mount Street, sah," he declared proudly.

"Which number?"

"Jus' Mount Street," the boy said. "I was to bring Mr. O'Malley to Mount Street, and here yo' is."

"I see," said Rollison. "Off you go, then." He took out a bright new shilling and handed it to the boy, whose eyes glistened and who seemed to be struck dumb. He climbed out, touched his forehead, looked at the shilling, touched his forehead again, then turned and began to run.

As he disappeared O'Malley groaned and stirred. Rollison made sure that the knot of the tie was still tight, then let the car run back against the curb and waited.

There was a row of single-storey houses on each side. Most were painted a brownish-yellow colour; a few were white. Each had a verandah and, on most, flowers and creeper were growing. In London he would have felt that there were eyes behind each curtain; he felt exactly the same here. O'Malley stirred again, and muttered something. Rollison took no notice of him, but slid his right hand into his pocket; the cold steel of the gun was comforting. He had never felt so much on edge, never been so conscious of peering eyes from hidden faces. Not far away was the rumble and bustle of the town—numbers and safety. Here, in broad daylight, there was a sense of lurking mystery and of danger.

O'Malley muttered again.

Rollison glanced at him, and saw his eyes flickering, but a movement on the other side of the car made him turn his head. A man had appeared, silently, stealthily, as if out of the earth itself. He stood there, tall, dark-skinned, unsmiling—and looking at O'Malley. His gaze seemed to will O'Malley to come round. He didn't look at Rollison, only at the red-head.

O'Malley blinked at him.

The dark-skinned man spoke in a language Rollison didn't understand; but he understood the terror which sprang into O'Malley's eyes.

Chapter III

MAN OF MYSTERY

O'Malley sat up and stretched out his bound hands, looking from them to the man at the side of the car. He answered in the same language. The dark-skinned man turned and looked at Rollison. There was a baleful glow in his eyes, explaining the terror he struck into O'Malley.

Rollison smiled.

"Good morning. Nice morning."

The man spoke again, in the strange language. It wasn't Afrikaans; Rollison, knowing that he would meet many Afrikaaner people in the Union, had taken the trouble to start learning the language, and could carry on a halting conversation.

This was a native tongue.

O'Malley licked his lips and turned to look at Rollison; he had difficulty in speaking.

"You've got to do what he tells you, Rollison. If you don't there'll be—there'll be trouble for me."

"I'd be so sorry about that," said Rollison drily.

"I only did what I was told——"

"I shouldn't do it too often or you'll get hurt. What does he want me to do?"

"Go with him, and—hand over your gun."

"I'll go with him, but keep the gun."

"Don't be a fool. He——"

"Wherever I go the gun goes with me. I'm going to keep it as a souvenir, the first present I received in South Africa. It'll be something to remember you by." Rollison

opened the door; the dark-skinned man moved aside. O'Malley muttered in the strange tongue—the dark-skinned man turned his back on Rollison, as if indifferent to the gun, and began to walk up the hill.

Rollison followed.

He felt as if a thousand eyes were watching him: from windows, from behind the flowering plants, from the mountain itself. The dark-skinned man, dressed in a beige-coloured suit, took long, steady steps. Rollison didn't look back. O'Malley was watching him, of course, and O'Malley was terrified, both for himself and for what might happen to Rollison.

The dark-skinned man walked on past two side turnings, then stopped at a house almost at the top of the street. Rollison caught up with him. The other bowed slightly, and stood aside. The house was Number 7. Rollison stepped into a wide verandah, and over a plant that trailed over the path. The door, painted pale green, opened without a sound; no one was in sight, a narrow hallway was in front of him. He stepped in. The dark-skinned man followed and closed the door. A diminutive boy appeared from behind the door, and disappeared.

The dark-skinned man led the way into a room on the right at the back of the house.

"Wait, please," he said.

He went out, and closed the door.

Rollison touched the gun again, and found it less comforting. He looked round, lighting a cigarette. It was an ordinary room with ordinary furniture; there were sepia-coloured photographs on the wall—family groups. The house was silent, the windows were closed, and they overlooked a blank wall. Rollison went to one of them, opened it cautiously and peered out; the passage alongside the house led to a back yard. He heard a sound that might have been a moan coming from a corner where a wooden shed stood. He heard it again. Was it a moan?

He moved away.

He didn't want to escape, he wanted to find out what this was about, why he had received such a welcome. It

could only have to do with that murdered man and the woman he had come to find, but—how had anyone discovered why he was here?

The door opened silently.

A man stepped in, short, dark-haired, yellow-skinned. His eyes were hooded and there were dark patches under them; the clouded eyes of the dope-addict. He had a long, mobile face, and was almost completely bald—a man, obviously of mixed blood, who would not easily be forgotten.

He stood with his back to the door.

"Dr. Livingstone, I presume," said Rollison brightly.

The newcomer smiled: it wasn't a reassuring smile.

"I don't think you will find this amusing, Mr. Rollison, if you go on like this. Strange accidents can occur in District 6. Why did you attack O'Malley?"

"I don't like being tricked."

"It was a foolish thing to do." The man spoke as if he were very tired. His voice was deep, but weary. He wore a shapeless suit of white drill, and his body sagged.

"We will forget it—O'Malley is a fool, too, and probably talked too much. Mr. Rollison, I know why you're here. It was a mistake to come. This is a strange country to you, and you will never find the woman you want to find. Even if you were to get near her, she would regret it—and you would regret it. Don't waste your own time and don't cause her any needless suffering. And—give me what Stein gave you. It is mine."

Rollison didn't answer.

"You can have a wonderful time in Cape Town, and in the Union," the other said. "You have money, friends, everything you want. You have told the Press that you are here on holiday; make that the simple truth. If you don't——" He shrugged his shoulders.

"So you have friends on the newspapers," Rollison murmured.

"I have friends everywhere. I can find out everything I want to know, whenever I need to. Make no mistake. You have friends in the East End of London, you can do

what you like there. I can do what I like here. I can even help you to have a wonderful time. But if you continue to keep what is mine, Mr. Rollison, then——"

He shrugged his shoulders, moved his hand, and pointed his thumb towards the floor.

Rollison murmured: "Too bad. What do you think Stein gave me?"

Stein, the dead man, had given him nothing but words.

The hooded eyes narrowed.

"You know. We will not play on words."

Rollison shrugged. The other frowned, began to say: "Is it possible——" then stopped.

He stared for a long time, then turned.

He had not seemed a man who could move swiftly; but he was out of the room in a flash. The door closed, leaving Rollison alone.

It was several minutes before Rollison moved. Then he turned slowly towards the window and looked out; only the blank wall faced him. He went to the door and tried the handle, half expecting it to be locked; it wasn't locked. He opened the door and stepped into the narrow passage. A smell of cooking came from the right, away from the front door. The dark-skinned man appeared and said briefly:

"This way, please."

He took Rollison to the front door, and actually bowed him out. Rollison didn't look back. He walked down the hill towards the car that had brought him—but turned a corner before he reached it. He found himself in a deserted street. He slipped into the first doorway, and waited. A few minutes later another car came up Mount Street, engine complaining. Rollison saw it pass and then heard it stop. He left the doorway, and saw that the car had stopped outside Number 7.

Two men emerged from the house and entered the car. One was tall and dark-skinned, dressed in a beige-coloured suit; the other was short and dark-haired, and

Rollison knew that he had a yellow skin and hooded eyes.

Rollison returned to the doorway in the side street as the car drove off. He waited another five minutes, and then went back into Mount Street and up to Number 7.

Without haste he walked up the side entrance to a wooden gate. He pushed it open, and went on by the side of the house. He passed a door and window, presumably of the kitchen, and then came into the back yard. No one was about. The yard was dirty, rubbish was heaped up in a corner and the dustbin overflowed with garbage.

He heard a familiar sound, a moan or groan, which came from the shed he had seen from inside the house. He paused, listening, and the sound came again, breaking the silence. The sun burned down on him, and in the distance he could see the Lion's Head, a rugged peak, companion to Table Mountain and the Twelve Apostles, which dominated the town.

The sound was repeated. The shed was old, some wood was rotting. A nearby dog barked loudly.

Rollison stepped towards the narrow door of the shed and put his ear close to the door; yes, someone was in there. He pulled at the door, but it didn't open. A faint smile curved his lips as he took out his penknife. His long fingers twisted the key, metal scraped on metal; the lock gave at once. He pulled at the door; it creaked noisily. He glanced round, but saw no one, just heard the moaning. The shed was filled with cobwebs and dirt, and there was a foetid smell. He waited, to accustom his eyes to the gloom, until he picked out the shape of a human form in the corner.

He went nearer.

A man or boy lay there; he groaned again. Rollison saw that he was coloured, coal black. His body lay limp and slack. Rollison turned, so that more light came into the outhouse. The dark face was twisted, as in pain. Rollison went down on one knee and began to feel the body; nothing seemed to be broken. Then he saw a glint of red.

The throat had been cut, but not deeply; there were head wounds, too.

Rollison flicked his lighter; the pale-yellow glow shone on the red. There was a nasty gash beneath the chin, but the bleeding was sluggish; the head wounds were worse. Rollison straightened up, turned—and stopped abruptly.

A man stood in the back yard; short, fat, black, dressed in a light-brown suit with white shoes. He blinked as Rollison stepped out of the gloom. Rollison found himself groping for his cigarettes; the sight in the shed hadn't been good.

"Good morning. Can you fetch a doctor?"

"I am a doctor, sir," the man said.

"You've a patient in there."

"I was afraid I should find that, sir."

"Why?"

The man who called himself a doctor rubbed his hands together softly and spoke in a gentle voice.

"I heard that I might be needed. I do not know who you are, sir, but I believe you are a stranger to this city. I do not know what has brought you to District 6, but I think you would be wise to go, and come only with a guide. There are bad men here, and—some of them have been interested in you. That much I know. Will you please go now? It will cause difficulties if you are hurt. Please go."

Rollison said: "What's your name?"

The man hesitated, glanced skywards as if seeking inspiration, and then said:

"I am Dr. Erasmus White. I will look after the boy."

"I want to know how he gets on."

"If you really want that, you can find me. I shall take the boy to hospital."

Rollison said: "Good." He nodded, and went back to the passage by the side of the house. When he looked round from the back door the doctor had already disappeared into the shed.

O'Malley's car still stood at the bottom of the street, but O'Malley wasn't in it. No one was in sight. Rollison

found his brief-case still on the seat; the lock had been forced, so they had searched it. He had forgotten the brief-case; had they forgotten the car? Rollison got in, found the keys there and started the engine. The street remained empty. With a shrug he released the brake and drove back the way he had come until he reached the main road; he saw a sign—Hanover Street. A man in Khaki uniform and wearing a revolver holster stood a little way from the corner. A policeman? Then what about the men in blue uniform? This man glanced at Rollison curiously and came towards him. Rollison slowed down, but as he did so a car horn blared. He looked round.

The girl reporter was leaning out of the window of the car, waving urgently. A young man—the photographer from her paper—sat at the wheel. Rollison pulled into the side of the road, and the girl spoke hurriedly as her car passed.

"Wait, please."

She sounded breathless.

Chapter IV

KATHLEEN MILLER

Rollison pulled into the side of the road. The other car pulled up in front; the girl jumped out, slammed the door and hurried to Rollison, who leaned across and opened the door for her. She climbed in. She looked—lovely. Her lips were parted, and she breathed heavily, as if with excitement; she had a figure in a thousand, and her complexion was perfect: tanned to a golden brown. She slammed the door, and said:

"Follow the car in front."

"Are you in the kidnapping business, too?"

She didn't answer, and Rollison started off. Here and there he passed a European, but most of the people were black. They wandered carelessly in front of the car, and he had to concentrate.

Soon he came to a wider thoroughfare, with palms on one side, and thousands of cars parked behind them. In the distance he could see docks, cranes and the single funnel of the *Athol Castle*. There were fewer coloured people here and many more white.

The car turned left.

"Where are you taking me?" he asked.

"I want to talk to you."

"I can't think of anything I'd like better. Where?"

"Go where I tell you," said the girl. "The other car will leave us now."

As she spoke they stopped at some traffic lights, and the driver of the other car turned and waved. Rollison

relaxed. The girl gave directions and he drove through the busiest part of the town, past high, modern buildings, along streets lined with cars. Traffic lights were everywhere, and the girl kept warning him of the stop signs on posts at the corners and painted on the road.

Out of the thick traffic they turned left along a street with gardens and graceful buildings on one side, white buildings on the other; then left again, and they passed the entrance to a large hotel. Soon they were driving past small, charming houses and, not long after, along a tree-lined road. There was a succession of sharp bends, and the road ran uphill all the way. Once or twice he glanced down, over Cape Town, and the sun shone on beauty.

"You can see the sights when we stop, it is safer to watch the road," said the girl.

"Thanks. You're Kathleen, aren't you?"

"Kathleen Miller."

"I suppose you really are a reporter?"

"Of course I am."

"I've a wonderful story for you."

The girl didn't answer, but gave him more directions, until they left the tarred road and drove along the edge of the mountain. The panorama of Cape Town, with the great bay and the docks and suburbs, showed in its glory. Above them on the other side the mountain rose steep, thickly wooded in parts; some of the trees were blackened, as with fire. They passed a group of men, felling trees and sawing them up, then turned a corner and came to a wide stretch of the road.

"This will do," said Kathleen Miller.

Rollison drew over to the side, parked the car in the shadows of the mountain, and drew out cigarettes. The girl took one. They lit up, and then got out and walked to the edge of the road. They were very close together. A wind blew off the shimmering blue sea.

"Do you like it?" asked the girl.

"It's magnificent."

"It's nothing. The view on the other side is much bet-

ter. There are some wonderful drives; I think this must be the most beautiful place in the world. You ought to give yourself a chance to enjoy it."

"I am enjoying it. Everything's just right—the weather, the company——"

"Please!" She touched his arm. "Don't joke. You are not here on holiday, I'm sure of that now. I tried to follow you from the docks. I recognized O'Malley. I lost you in the traffic. I was frightened. O'Malley is a criminal, and works for men who are worse. In an hour you found all that is worst in Cape Town. Had you not come when you did, I should have sent for the police." Her English was excellent if a trifle stilted.

"Instead, you waited for a story."

"Not just that." Her voice was sharp. "Tell me this: had you arranged to meet O'Malley here?"

"No."

"Then why did you go with him?"

"He said he was from the hotel."

She stared at him—and her tension eased a little, her lips curved, dimples showed in her cheeks. She was not much more than twenty-two or three, and there was the delight of youth in her eyes.

"The great Toff—fooled so easily!"

"That's right," said Rollison ruefully.

"But"—a frown came—"why did he want you? What happened?"

"I was kidnapped."

Alarm flared into her eyes.

"And warned to have a nice long holiday." Rollison tossed the end of his cigarette towards the edge of the mountainside, and it lay there, smoking. The girl moved at once, trod it out, and spoke sharply.

"You must not be careless with cigarettes, it might start a fire. It is an offence to do that."

"Sorry."

"So—they knew why you were here," said Kathleen.

"They thought they did. They were wrong, and realized it. So they let me go." He watched the girl amusedly.

She stared towards the sea for a few seconds, and asked suddenly:

"Who else did you see?"

"O'Malley didn't introduce us."

"What was the man like?"

"Short, dark-haired, hooded eyes, a yellow face, like parchment. He might have been any age from forty to eighty. He was bald-headed and had a deep voice. Quite a nice chap."

"Nice," breathed the girl. "You saw Glebber himself. *Glebber.*" She whispered the word. "He is the most dangerous man in Cape Town—perhaps in the Union. And fiendishly clever, but—he kidnapped you. The police can get him now." She was suddenly and fiercely excited, and pulled at his sleeve. "You should have told me this before, he might have left the town, he moves fast, it is almost impossible to track him down. Hurry, we must get to a telephone."

Rollison stood where he was.

"Oh, no. I don't want to talk to the police—yet."

"You must."

"If you say anything to them, I shall say that I have been pulling your leg, and you made up the rest."

Anger flamed in her expressive eyes.

"You are a fool. This is dangerous. Glebber——"

"I like getting to know bad men. Glebber did me no harm. Here I am. I knocked O'Malley about, but Glebber wasn't spiteful. I'd like to play this game myself, because I want to know why Glebber thinks I came to the Cape." He meant that he wanted to know what it was Glebber thought Stein had given him.

"You *can't* find it out for yourself," she said earnestly. "You don't know the place or the people. You cannot tell a good coloured man from a bad. Glebber is the organizer of some of the gangs which give so much trouble. The police can never prove it against him, but—where there is smuggling, Glebber is behind it. Drugs—diamonds—gold—tobacco—always, Glebber is in the background. His men get caught sometimes, but no one can

ever prove anything against Glebber. With this he might be caught and put into prison. Don't you understand that?"

Rollison said: "I don't want him in prison—yet."

She turned away, looked towards the sea and with the wind blowing her light cotton dress against her body she looked superb. Rollison watched her, until she turned back abruptly.

"I shall report at once to my editor. He will decide. I know what he will do."

Rollison shrugged.

She went on sharply: "The police will then come to you, instead of you going to them. If you try to shield Glebber they may think that you are working with him. You will get a bad reputation. I am sorry. You still have the chance to see them yourself."

"Sorry. No."

She swung round, and began to walk away. He watched the grace of her movements and her erect figure. Then he went leisurely to the car and drove after her. She had walked nearly two hundred yards, and didn't look round when he drew level. He stopped, opened the door and asked:

"Can I take you anywhere, ma'am?"

"I will walk."

"It's a long walk."

"You cannot make me change my mind."

"I never try to make a woman change her mind, she does it quite often enough without help from me. Get in, Kath. Do what you think best, but first show me the way to my hotel."

"Very well," she said stiffly.

She made one more futile attempt to make him change his mind, then directed him to the drive leading to the Cape Hotel, assured him she could get a bus or taxi from the drive, and went off.

Rollison went on slowly.

The hotel, large, painted pale green, seemed to be at

the foot of the mountain. A boy came hurrying to open the door, and told Rollison where to park. He signed the register, and was told that his luggage had already gone up to his room. Nothing seemed unusual, this might have been a hotel anywhere in Europe, except for the white-clad Indian waiters, with their white hats and shoes. A boy took him up to his second-floor room. It was large and airy, the windows opened on to a verandah overlooking private grounds dotted with palm trees with thick trunks, and a canopy of branches. A smaller tree with a deep red flower caught the sun.

He watched the view, with the Lion's Head in the distance and a corner of the mountain showing, then turned to look at his luggage.

He examined each piece, and frowned when he looked at the largest of his three suitcases. The metal round the locks looked as if it had been scratched—and the scratches were new. He unlocked it quickly; the clothes were neatly packed inside, but had been moved.

All three cases had been searched. Glebber certainly believed he had something that mattered.

There was a sharp tap at the door, as he went through the cases to make sure that nothing had been stolen.

Chapter V

THE EARNEST YOUNG MAN

Rollison lit a cigarette as he crossed the room.

He was prepared to see the police, and half-prepared to find Kathleen Miller. Instead, he saw a tall, fair-haired young man, powerful, lean and well-dressed. The caller stood close to the door, with an eager gleam in his eyes.

"Mr. Rollison?"

"I thought I'd seen all the newspapers," said Rollison ruefully.

"Oh, I'm not from a newspaper," said the stranger. "That's not my line of country at all. Er—I wonder if you could spare me half an hour? My name's Anson, Charles Anson. I've heard of you and——" Although he paused, the eagerness still glowed in his eyes. He could be hero-worshipper or celebrity hunter; or he might simply want to sell the *Encyclopædia Britannica* or a car.

Rollison glanced at his watch.

"Half an hour, gladly. But not right now. I've an important appointment. If you'd care to come back in a couple of hours, say, or——"

"But I can't," said Charles Anson in distress. "I've an hour at the most. I know it's an infernal nerve, but if you could——"

A salesman would hardly set a time limit or apologize for nerve.

"Supposing you wait for me downstairs, and I'll call you if I'm free in time," said Rollison. If Anson were serious he would wait.

"Of course. Very good of you. I wouldn't worry you if it weren't extremely important."

"Good! I won't keep you any longer than I can help." He beamed at the young man, and closed the door.

He went through his luggage, found nothing missing, looked out of the window and of the door and saw no sign of being watched.

The police hadn't arrived. It was just possible that the girl had tried to bluff him, and that she hadn't gone to the police or her editor. He sat on the side of the bed, finished his cigarette, then decided that he might as well see what Charles Anson wanted. He went downstairs to a long, narrow lounge with a door which opened on to extensive gardens. The grass was bright green after the spring rains, and the Lion's Head towered immediately in front of him, topped by cloud.

Anson wasn't here.

Rollison made sure that the young man was not in the lounge or on the verandah, and strolled into the hall. Two small page boys and two porters at the desk looked at him impassively. He went outside. A car pulled up. Two men dressed in blue got out; one opened the back door, and Kathleen Miller appeared.

She saw Rollison, and coloured furiously.

He pretended not to notice her, turned back and spoke to the larger of the two porters.

"I'm Rollison. A young man called for me not long ago, and was to wait."

"That's right, sir. Mr. Anson."

"Do you know where he is?"

"He went just outside, sir. Isn't he there?"

"I didn't see him." Rollison turned to the door as a boy opened it for the police and Kathleen Miller. Rollison beamed at the girl, and slipped past the police on to the steps. There was no sign of the youngster. A boy was wiping the windscreen of a car; he had probably seen Anson.

A porter called:

"Mr. Rollison—can you spare a minute?"

"Yes. What happened to the car I came in?"

"A driver took it away, sir. It was a hire-car, wasn't it?"

"Er—yes. Has Mr. Anson turned up?"

"No, sir. Someone else would like to speak to you."

"Oh, thanks." Rollison went ahead. The two policemen stared at him and the girl came forward. "Why, hallo, Miss Miller! After a celebrity for a story?"

"I——"

"I am a police officer, Mr. Rollison," said one of the men. "Shall we go up to your room?"

"Oh, I see," said Rollison. "Official welcome, too. Scotland Yard will be delighted." He led the way to the lift, and the others crowded in after him. He didn't speak until he entered his room, where he bowed half mockingly to the girl.

"So you've done your duty, Miss Miller."

"I'm glad you see it that way, Mr. Rollison," said the spokesman. "Miss Miller had to report what happened. It was a mistake on your part to try to conceal anything."

"Oh. Sorry. Habit."

"I can well understand that," said the policeman drily. "We have heard a little of your habits in England. You'll have to realize that conditions in Cape Town are very different from London. Will you be good enough to tell us exactly what happened?"

"Do I have to sign a statement?"

"Later, sir."

"I must be careful what I say, then." Rollison beamed, and began to talk. He told the story in detail, but left out some of it—including the fact that Glebber had obviously believed that he had come to South Africa with a purpose. He named Dr. White. If the police were anxious to check his story, they would soon trace White and the injured boy. He told everything he knew about O'Malley, too; both the police officers seemed properly impressed.

"And that's the lot—except that Miss Miller rescued me." Rollison beamed at the girl.

"You don't seem to have needed much rescuing," said

the spokesman drily. "You've been extremely lucky. The man whom you saw is one of the most notorious men in Cape Town—half Indian, half Portuguese."

"A bad man, eh?"

"Very."

"Too bad he's not in gaol."

The spokesman obviously had a sense of humour; he smothered a grin.

"All in good time, sir. You may help us to put him there. Are you sure this house was in Mount Street?"

"Yes."

"What number?"

"Number 7."

"Sure?"

"The good God gave me eyes," murmured Rollison.

"Ah, yes. Thank you." The policeman relaxed, and looked as if he had nearly finished; he actually turned towards the door, and then said casually: "What I can't understand, Mr. Rollison, is why a man of this kind should have arranged to see you so soon after your arrival."

"Yes. Puzzling."

"Is it?"

"It puzzles me, but the police probably know everything."

"They usually find out," said the policeman tartly. "It isn't Glebber's habit to meet celebrities off the ship. Had you ever seen him before?"

"No."

"Heard of him?"

"No."

"Why did you really go with O'Malley?"

Rollison chuckled. took out cigarettes, offered them all round and when they refused, said lightly: "Because he said he'd been sent by the hotel."

"Then what is so funny, Mr. Rollison?"

"My thoughts. That policemen are policemen all the world over, and seem to have been born with suspicious minds. I've told you all I can. Nothing up my sleeve. I'll

sign that statement whenever you like, provided it's within the next few days. I want to go up country."

"You'll hear from us again today."

That might have been a veiled threat; Rollison let it pass. The police went out, and the girl followed. Rollison didn't know why she had come, but could guess that the police had asked her to.

"Good-bye, Kath," murmured Rollison.

He closed the door, looked round, went to the window and refreshed himself with a glance at the Lion's Head; the room overlooked the lovely gardens at the rear. The police had been at once thorough and casual—they hadn't done what Glebber had expected, and searched his room. He began to unpack, filled several drawers from a case, then arranged the top and bottom drawers very carefully. It was then nearly one o'clock, and he was hungry.

He was also puzzled, and considered the situation as he had an excellent lunch, waited on assiduously by an Indian.

The girl reporter's part was easily explained, and she probably regretted what she had been forced to do; a nice girl. Charles Anson was a nice boy—or at least had seemed one, but his eager and hurried visit and his departure made him a minor mystery. What had he wanted? Had he lacked the nerve to say, and gone off? If Anson were important, he would turn up again. Rollison forgot him and went to the telephone. He called a newspaperman whom he had known in London.

"Hallo, Rolly! When can you come and have a drink?"

Rollison grinned.

"Soon. Meanwhile, you could give me the name of a really good inquiry agent—off the record."

"You retiring?"

"Old age is near."

He was given the agent's name, telephoned, and started the search for the widow of Stein. He did not mention that Glebber might know her.

Glebber had possibly been responsible, at long range,

for Stein's murder. Being in touch with Glebber made a good start. Now he needed information about South Africa, the police and District 6. He had expected to spend a week or ten days looking round; events had been too quick.

Glebber might let him alone for a bit now.

Kathleen Miller could be a useful contact, but already seemed nervous; she probably thought that she had put herself in his bad books.

He was lighting a cigarette when a porter came along.

"Excuse me, sir, you're wanted on the telephone."

"Thanks." Rollison followed him into the telephone booths in the hall.

"Hallo?"

He heard young Anson's voice; its eagerness was unmistakable.

"Mr. Rollison?"

"Yes."

"I'm terribly sorry I had to rush away, I forgot an urgent appointment. I wonder if you could come——"

He broke off.

"Where?" asked Rollison sharply.

There was no sound at the telephone, nothing to suggest they had been cut off. Rollison waited for fully a minute, and was about to call the exchange when he heard the receiver being replaced. He had the impression that it went back softly and stealthily.

He hung up, and was very thoughtful.

Anson's peculiar behaviour was puzzling; almost cause for alarm. Why had he broken off? Where had he wanted Rollison to go? What was he so anxious to talk about? Who had replaced the receiver?

Rollison went up to his room immediately. It looked exactly as he had left it. He crossed to the dressing-table and examined the clothes he'd put in the drawers; they had been disturbed. His lips curved. The police hadn't been long after Glebber in searching. Now they were probably satisfied that he'd brought in nothing that he shouldn't. They might look again. He sat on the bed,

leaned across and lifted the telephone receiver. Soon he was asking the Editorial Department of *Die Komeet* for Miss Miller.

She was in.

"Why, hallo," said Rollison brightly. "This is the notorious Mr. Rollison, from London, England. I'll be at the Adderley Street end of the Avenue in half an hour. Don't be late, will you?"

He rang off.

He'd heard of the Avenue on the ship coming over, and hoped it was a reasonable meeting place. The porter seemed to think so, said he could walk there in twenty minutes, and gave careful directions.

It was still bright and sunny, and hot in the sun, but a breeze made it cool in the shade. Rollison reached the Avenue, glad of the oak trees which lined it on either side. He knew, vaguely that he was passing some of the better-known buildings in Cape Town but wasn't thinking of them. He wasn't even thinking of Kathleen Miller or Charles Anson.

He was thinking of the man who was following him.

It was a coloured man, reasonably well dressed, who had been outside the gates of the hotel and kept within fifty yards of him ever since. Glebber's man? Would the police use a coloured plainclothes man? Rollison thought it unlikely, but didn't know—that was the difficulty, the unfamiliarity of so many things. He quickened his pace; so did the man behind him. He stopped to admire a flowering bush; the other dawdled behind him.

He reached the main road. Adderley Street was a little way along on the left. It was twenty-five minutes since he had telephoned the girl; if she were coming she would be there.

He dodged across the road in front of a fast-moving car, which had to swerve, reached the opposite pavement, and almost ran towards the first corner. A glance showed that his follower was actually running. Rollison slipped into a shop—a gown shop, and hid behind cur-

tains which shut off the window from the shop itself. The coloured man went past.

Rollison turned to face two surprised young women.

"Good afternoon," he said. "Sorry if I scared you. Good-bye."

He didn't go right outside at first, but glanced out; there was no sign of the man. He retraced his steps, keeping a sharp lookout.

Kath Miller was waiting.

Her back was to Rollison as he crossed the road again to a spot where he had seen several taxis waiting. He hired one, told the driver to pull up in Adderley Street; there was just room, behind a parking plot. The girl saw the cab coming and Rollison at the window. He opened the door, and she moved forward.

"Hurry, Kath!"

She took him at his word. He helped her in, then sank down in his corner. He thought he saw the coloured man coming along the street, but wasn't sure; he couldn't tell one from another easily. As soon as there was no danger of being recognized, he sat up and his cigarette-case came out as if by magic.

"Forgiven me, Kath?"

"I don't know what you're talking about. Why did you meet me like this?"

"To dodge the bad man. Or—would the police use a coloured man to follow me?"

"No."

"Then it's a bad man."

He thought she paled a little. The driver looked round, and asked where to go.

"Signal Hill," said Rollison promptly, and settled down again. "Kath, I want some information and I don't think anyone else can give it to me—willingly. Where can I find Dr. White?"

"You mean the coloured doctor you met?"

"Yes."

"Probably at the Native Hospital," said the girl. "Why?"

"I want to find out how that boy's getting on."

"He'll be all right. I telephoned the hospital—for the paper," Kathleen added, half defiantly as if she wanted to make sure that he didn't think her soft-hearted. "They think he will be about again in ten days or so. Some of the coloured boys have very thick skulls. He was lucky. Like you," she went on, and the defiant note was still in her voice. She looked straight ahead of her, and Rollison watched the movement of her lips and admired the tip of her nose; she was a delight to the eye. "Take my advice and have nothing more to do with any of them. While you're in the Cape, mix with your own kind. You were lucky with the policeman who questioned you, a lot of them would have been more hostile—and you certainly asked for it."

"You're almost as good as a policeman yourself," said Rollison. "Tell me, you ought to know everyone whom hall porters know, oughtn't you?"

"Of course not—don't be absurd."

"I mean local people."

"Why don't you say exactly what you mean?"

"I will. Who is Charles Anson?"

She turned and looked at him as if she had been shot; he had been prepared to find that she was familiar with Anson's name, but not that she should be astounded.

"How on earth did you get to know of him?"

"He came to see me."

"Why?"

"I don't know."

"*I* don't know how much to believe of anything you tell me. Charles Anson is a playboy. Or rather, he was. His father was one of the really rich men on the Rand—his grandfather before him. Charles inherited millions, and lost most of them. He was notorious on the Cape. Drinking, gambling—everything. Everyone talked about him, and that meant he wasn't normal."

"Well, well. He's only a boy."

"A boy? He's thirty, if he's a day."

"Oh, yes, of course—an old man, by your standards," murmured Rollison. "How did he lose his money?"

"I don't know the whole story. Bad investments, mostly —*and* mixing with the wrong company. I can't imagine why he should want to see you, but I suppose it's a waste of time asking."

"You've asked once. He went off before he told me what he wanted. Is he a man of mystery?"

"I've not heard that—only that he's an irresponsible fool."

"With a bad reputation among the fair sex?"

She didn't answer.

"Know him personally?" asked Rollison.

"I've met him."

"I see," said Rollison. "Thanks, Kath."

They were nearly at the top of Signal Hill, and Cape Town spread out before them; the view was better than from the other hill. The taxi-driver stopped at viewpoint, expecting them to get out.

"Thanks," said Rollison. "Now we'll go back."

The driver gaped.

Kathleen Miller said little on the way down, through a coloured quarter where children played in the streets or sat on the steps of the small one-storey houses. In the centre of the city Rollison said: "*Die Komeet*, driver."

"Thank you." Kathleen was frigidly polite.

"Pleasure." Rollison smiled. "Don't worry about me Kath, and thanks for being so helpful. By the way, what was the name of that native boy?"

"George."

"Just George?"

"That's all I know. Don't worry about him."

"Of course not," said Rollison.

She left the car near the newspaper office, and walked off. Rollison was driven back to the hotel. As he passed through the gates he saw a familiar figure lounging near —the man who had followed him. He winked, but received only a blank stare in return. He was smiling when he paid the driver off and still smiling when he reached the hall.

"There's a message for you, sir," said the porter at the

desk, and handed him an envelope with his name scrawled on, and the word *Urgent* underlined in the top left-hand corner. He opened it as he strolled into the lounge, which was almost deserted. He stood by the window, reading and frowning.

The message read:

Will you please come to Hersch Farm, near Stellenbosch, as quickly as possible? It's desperately urgent. You're the only one who can help me. I think you already know what it's about.—Charles Anson.

Anson had added a postscript:

Be very careful not to let anyone else know where you are going.

Chapter VI

THE FARM

Rollison screwed the letter up into a ball and put it into his pocket. He walked slowly upstairs. He wasn't wondering whether to go to the farm, but how to get there without anyone else knowing. He hesitated outside his door, listened carefully, then opened it without a sound and flung it back; he was prepared for anything.

The room was empty, except for a letter lying on the dressing-table—an airmail letter from England. It was from the man, Jolly, who had hoped to come to South Africa, and had been greatly disappointed. Rollison skimmed it through. The murder of the man Stein was still an unsolved mystery; Jolly had been unable to discover anything more in London. He had timed the letter to arrive just before Rollison, hoped it had been a good trip and that Rollison would not find it necessary to neglect sightseeing altogether. Characteristic Jolly. Rollison took out Anson's note, burned it in an ashtray, and lifted the telephone receiver.

The hall porter could certainly recommend a firm from which he could hire a drive-yourself car. . . .

Half an hour later Rollison drove out of the hotel gates at the wheel of a powerful Buick, and complete with a detailed map of the district, including the university town of Stellenbosch. The coloured man was still lounging in the drive; he appeared to take no notice as

Rollison drove out. Rollison turned right, but kept a sharp look-out.

A Chrysler, parked on the other side of the road, moved swiftly after him. He drove by a devious route towards the road he wanted; the Chrysler kept on his tail. Its driver knew the city, and Rollison had little chance of shaking him off.

Glebber certainly meant business.

Rollison reached a wide road which was comparatively free from traffic, and started to speed, so did the Chrysler. He was in no mood for wasting time, but suddenly braked; the Chrysler driver was forced to slow down and to swing across to avoid him. Rollison jumped out of his car as the other pulled up. It was a strange man, but not the one who had followed him on foot.

Rollison said softly: "Tell Glebber or O'Malley that I'm tired of their tricks. And give them this—with my compliments."

He was leaning inside the other car, and brought his clenched fist up. It caught the driver on the chin and made his eyes roll, the man fell.

Rollison got back into his own car and started off. He took a chance on crossing Lewes, but slowed down when he came to a busy thoroughfare, with the pavements thronged and many cyclists on either side. From then on he saw no sign of the Chrysler. Following the map closely, he reached the wide National road. It stretched into the distance, with undulating land on either side. He stepped on the accelerator and roared it savagely.

Nine Stallards is to be reached by Hush Farm; in hour and ten minutes after he had left the hotel he reached it.

The farm house itself was old in Dutch style, graceful and long, against the background of wooded mountains. On either side were vineyards. Rollison had passed one after one, the vines, neatly low to the ground and the leaves a bright green. He could see meadowland, and

a herd of cows; there were sheep in the distance, too, but obviously the main business at Hersch Farm was grapes. Rollison saw low-lying buildings which he took to be the wine-cellars or storage houses. They were painted white, and looked neat and new in the bright sunlight. In front of the house itself trees spread their branches and gave shadow and coolness. He pulled the car up beneath the trees, as a huge dog, like a great Dane, came bounding towards him. It stood twenty yards away, and when he opened the door and stepped out, began to bark—a deep, threatening sound. Rollison stood up by the car and the barking grew louder.

Rollison moved forward, ignoring the dog, although he didn't feel too safe. The dog also moved but kept the same distance away.

The front door was open, but no one appeared; no servants were about, and he hadn't seen anyone in the grounds. As he reached the steps, the dog's barking reached a furious pitch. Rollison went up a short flight of steps, and as he reached the front door the dog bounded towards him. He liked it much less, but ignored it, and rang the bell. The dog stopped barking, and growled.

There was no reply.

Rollison rang again; still nothing happened.

He stepped inside the house, sure that the dog would leap at him. It didn't. There was quiet, except for its growing—and an empty house?

Rollison called: "Anson!"

No sound came.

He stood in a wide entrance lounge, and a door ahead was open, showing a huge room with a long dining-table and some easy chairs; french windows at the far end opened on to another garden. Rollison went through, and the dog allowed him to.

"No one about, old chap?" Rollison asked. "Odd, in a big place like this, isn't it?"

He went into the big room.

Lying on the floor behind the door, with a gaping wound in his head, was O'Malley.

Rollison did not move towards the man. The dog pushed past him, went across to O'Malley, sniffed and trotted to the french windows at the other end of the room. He stood looking out; apparently he had accepted Rollison.

O'Malley lay inert.

Rollison went to three other doors, opening each in turn. Two led to bedrooms, one to a passage and a kitchen beyond. There was no sound. He turned back towards the big room and the injured man.

Injured? Or dead?

As he bent down on one knee, he had a feeling of being watched; the feeling that had never really left him since he had reached Cape Town. He didn't look round, but examined the man. He spent more time with O'Malley than was strictly necessary; there was nothing he could do for the dead.

O'Malley had been murdered, and the wounds were like that of the coloured boy, George. Had the same man used the same weapon?

Rollison was kneeling in such a position that his hands could only be seen from the passage door. He went through the contents of O'Malley's pockets, swiftly and skilfully; and he wasn't surprised to find them worthless and useless. Anything which O'Malley might have carried and which would have helped Rollison would have been taken away by the killer.

Rollison straightened up.

"Can't you find anything?" asked a man.

The voice was low-pitched and expressionless; Glebber's voice. Rollison stood with his back to the other, who had entered by the front door. He didn't answer.

"I have warned you," Glebber said. "Now you see again what happens to men who——"

He broke off.

Rollison couldn't see him, but heard his gasp—and also heard the padding sound of footsteps. He swung

round. The huge dog, half-way along the room, leapt towards Glebber. Glebber turned, tried to slam the door, let it slip out of his fingers, and ran towards the front steps, in panic. The dog disappeared.

Rollison shouted: "Stop! Stop!"

He reached the door.

The dog leapt at Glebber's back, as the man turned on his heel. Rollison saw the glint of steel. He was too late to do anything; the bullet spat out with a roar. The dog, only a foot away from Glebber, seemed to stop in mid-air, and then drop heavily. Glebber was breathing hard, and staring at the dog—but swivelled the gun round as Rollison took another step forward.

"Stay there," he warned.

Rollison stopped.

"Well, well, the man who can frighten the whole world is afraid of a dog." He smiled broadly. "Did anyone ever tell you that I have a particularly nasty way with dog-killers?"

Glebber was still shaken, and his voice was harsh.

"You talk too much."

"That's what everyone says. Glebber, I'm going to get you before I leave South Africa. You're going to suffer for killing the dog and for killing O'Malley—and you're going to suffer more for having George attacked."

"That trash! And I didn't kill O'Malley, he was too useful. Listen, Rollison. Give me my property, and go back to England. I won't let you stay here. You've caused enough trouble already, but——"

"You started it. In trouble with the police now, aren't you?" said Rollison gently. "Like it?"

"The police do not trouble me. I have too many—friends." Glebber hesitated after the word. His eyes were still heavy, as with dope, and the dark patches beneath them looked almost black. His shoulders still sagged, too. In some ways he was unimpressive; in others, there seemed to be all the evil of the world in him.

Rollison said: "Friends? I doubt if you've one you don't buy with money. The kind that always let you down,

Glebber. I've come to find Martha Stein. You had her husband murdered in London. Remember?"

The cloudy eyes narrowed.

"You guess too much, too."

"You had Stein followed to England. He'd gone there to get financial backing for a big project. He'd struck oil—well, a kind of oil. Your men made his life hell—and finally they killed him. But he'd come to see me. He didn't dare go to the police because he had a black past. He begged me to find his wife, who'd disappeared. He was frightened for her, because she knew where he'd struck that oil. He was right to be frightened. I've come for her."

Glebber spoke almost wearily.

"You won't find her. Give me——"

Rollison said: "Why don't you say what you want? Name it."

Glebber said: "You know what it is. Give it me. Go back to England. You can't get rich with Stein's oil." The word "oil" made him smile. "Just obey, Rollison."

"Or what?"

Glebber raised the gun an inch, but didn't shift his gaze from Rollison's. The two men stood within a couple of yards of each other, with the dead dog in between—and not far away, the body of O'Malley. Rollison had all the proof he would ever want that Glebber was a killer—and yet Glebber hesitated to kill him.

Why? He wanted that "property" first.

Glebber said: "I won't warn you again."

He turned—and moved with that lightning-like speed which had surprised Rollison before. It didn't surprise him this time. He flashed his hand to his pocket, took out his cigarette-case and flung it. It caught Glebber on the nape of the neck, as the door was closing. Glebber staggered, and Rollison went after him. He snatched at the gun, twisted Glebber's wrist, and the gun dropped. Glebber's lips were tight, as with pain. He had the sense not to struggle; that grip could break his arm.

Rollison released him, pushed him away and, while he was staggering, picked up the gun and his case. He

looked bleakly at Glebber, whose expression didn't change. The open front door showed the beauty of the shady trees and the vineyards beyond. A soft breeze blew in, and there was no sound.

Rollison said: "Come in, Glebber."

"You are being very foolish."

"I know. Come in."

Glebber didn't move, but spoke again in a deadly voice; there was menace in every syllable.

"I have warned you. Give me no more trouble. Leave South Africa."

He turned and walked away.

Rollison could have shot him, but didn't. There was nothing he liked about Glebber, but he admired cool nerve in anyone; and Glebber had it. Glebber actually reached the top of the steps before Rollison said lazily:

"Come back."

Glebber went on.

Rollison raised the gun and fired. The shot roared out, but was less loud here than inside. The bullet caught Glebber high on the right shoulder, where Rollison had intended. The man staggered, missed a step, steadied himself and stopped. For a long time he seemed to be looking into the distance; then he swung on his heel and came back. His eyes glittered; now the evil in him burned like fire. He passed Rollison and drew in his breath, as a snake hissing. Then he went into the big room and stood with his back to the table, facing Rollison as he entered.

Rollison put the gun away.

Glebber held his right arm up a little, the hand in his pocket; he showed no sign of pain, but blood was seeping through at the top of his fawn-coloured coat.

Rollison said softly: "Glebber, I've come for Mrs. Stein. Where is she?"

"If I knew, would I tell you?"

"You know."

"You are a fool," sneered Glebber. "If I knew where to

find her, I would find her. If I had found her, she would have told me everything she knew by now."

Rollison murmured: "Time will show who's the bigger fool. Where is Mrs. Stein?"

"I don't know."

"Where's Charles Anson?"

Glebber smiled faintly, but there was no glint of the smile in his eyes.

"The young man who is so anxious to see you—as he says. Rollison, I shouldn't trust Anson too far." He actually laughed; it was a cackle of sound. All the time the patch of red on his shoulder grew larger—slowly but noticeably. He must be feeling considerable pain.

"Wouldn't you?" asked Rollison. "I still want to know where he is."

"O'Malley came to find him. You know what happened to O'Malley." Glebber didn't actually say that Anson had killed O'Malley.

"You aren't getting very far, are you?" he sneered.

"No," said Rollison. "Take off your coat."

"Why?"

Rollison said softly: "Glebber, I think you've made a mistake about me. Take off your coat. If you argue any more, I'll smash your face to pulp."

Glebber didn't hurry, but lost no time. He handed the coat across. Rollison went through the pockets, and put everything he found on to the table; there was not a great deal.

"Turn round," he ordered.

Glebber obeyed. Rollison tapped his pockets, made sure that he carried nothing else that might be of interest, and then spoke quietly into his ear.

"So you don't know where Mrs. Stein is?"

"If I knew, I would not be looking for her. If I find difficulty in locating her, you will find much more."

"You'll meet trouble before you realize it. Where's your car?"

"At the back."

"Did you drive yourself?"

"Yes."

"Where are the servants?"

"They were sent away."

"By whom?"

"Anson, perhaps. He owns the place," said Glebber. Rollison hadn't expected that, and didn't like the obvious implications. Anson's behaviour had been peculiar. Kathleen Miller certainly hadn't much time for him. If Glebber were right Anson had sent the servants away possibly so that he could be alone when he talked to Rollison.

"Where is Anson?"

"So you are surprised," murmured Glebber.

"You're in for a surprise yourself. I'm going to tie you up, take you to your own car and leave you there. Then I'll call the police, and you can tell them how O'Malley died."

The man shrugged.

Rollison hit him on the nape of the neck with the butt of the gun. He saved the man from falling, carried him to a chair and examined the shoulder wound. It wasn't serious, but he bathed it before putting Glebber's coat on again. Then he rummaged through the kitchen, found some cord, bound the man hand and foot, and carried him out to the car. It stood in the shade of a huge loquat tree, heavy-laden with bright yellow fruit. He left him in the back seat, and then returned to the house.

Now, with luck, there would be an attempt to rescue Glebber, who wasn't likely to have come here alone. The rescuers would be drawn to the car, and Rollison would have a sight of them.

No one came.

Rollison's thoughts roamed uneasily. The sensation of being watched had gone, but danger seemed more acute. Glebber's calmness and his confidence that he need not worry about the police was part of the reason. Glebber had strong forces behind him, and there wasn't much against him yet. Rollison's evidence about his own kidnapping wasn't enough for a charge, and Glebber had

probably covered himself over the attack on the native boy, George.

Now there was O'Malley's murder.

Rollison went back into the big room. O'Malley and the dead dog lay just as they had fallen.

Rollison stood by the open front door, watched the car, and pondered. If Martha Stein were hiding from Glebber, and knew where the "oil" was, she was of first importance. Stein had been sure that she couldn't cope by herself, and obviously must have known the danger she was in from Glebber.

Glebber was danger number one, but—Anson *might* have killed O'Malley. Anson might be in hiding, here.

If he played the game as most would, he would carry out his threat to telephone the police, and have them here before Glebber could be rescued. But Glebber in gaol wouldn't help him; in fact it would mean that the police would take over; that wasn't at all what Rollison wanted.

Still undecided, Rollison went to the telephone which was on a table in a corner of the big room. He lifted the receiver, and waited; there was no reply. There was deadness; he banged the receiver up and down several times, but there was still no reply.

So the line was cut.

He replaced the receiver, smiling tautly. Now he couldn't call the police. He went to the back door; Glebber was still helpless in the car. Had O'Malley been Glebber's only bodyguard after all? Was the rescue attempt a vain hope?

Rollison turned back, and as he passed the kitchen window he fancied that he saw movement outside. He stood to one side of the window, invisible from anyone who glanced this way.

A man appeared, moving swiftly from tree to tree, going away from the house and towards the car. Rollison only caught glimpses of his back, but felt sure who it was. The man appeared near the car, stepped out of the

cover of the trees, glanced round as if nervously and went nearer and peered into the car.

It was Anson.

He stared at Glebber, then turned; and as he moved, he rubbed his hands together, as if in jubilation. That looked innocent—but meant that Anson knew Glebber well enough to rejoice at his plight.

Anson came more boldly towards the kitchen door. In thirty seconds or so he would be in the house. Rollison went into the big room. He was full of questions about Anson.

He didn't want Anson to see O'Malley's body, and dragged it behind a couch, then put a skin rug over the blood. Breathing heavily, he waited.

Chapter VII

ANSON'S STORY

Anson was in the kitchen, moving briskly; his footsteps were very loud now.

"Anyone about?" he called.

"Waiting," said Rollison heavily.

The door from the kitchen passage was thrust open.

"Hallo!" cried Anson. "You're better than your reputation. No one else in the world could have fixed Glebber like that."

"Oh, come," murmured Rollison.

"No false modesty, now," said Anson brightly. He threw back his head and laughed. It was a deep, pleasant sound, very unlike Glebber's. He looked even younger when he was laughing, and certainly more handsome. It was easy to imagine him as a playboy; there was a boldness about his looks which clashed with the almost naive eagerness he had shown at the hotel and was showing now. "You must have done a marvellous job. I—I don't mind telling you that if there's a man in the world I'm scared of, it's Glebber. That is, I was. Now I'll be able to laugh at him, just say 'Rollison' and watch him quake. How on earth did you deal with him like that?"

"I took him by surprise."

"He must be slipping. What are you going to do with him?"

"Supposing we have a little fireside chat ourselves before we decide? We'll go where we can see Glebber,"

said Rollison, and they went into a smaller room. The car and Glebber were still there.

"Is this your farm?" asked Rollison.

"Yes. Mind you, I don't live here, a manager runs it for me, I spend a few days here now and again, week-ends usually."

"Why did you leave the hotel in such a hurry, and why did you go away from the telephone?"

Anson looked sheepish.

"Well—to tell you the simple truth, I was in a blue funk both times. Glebber. That's what I came to see you about. I was waiting for you at the hotel when I had a message from him. A telephone call. He'd had me watched and knew where I was. He told me to keep away from you, and—well, I hadn't the guts to disobey him. That is, not then. I decided to make him think that I was doing what he wanted, but to get in touch with you again later. As I did. I slunk off, and called you from a call-box. And——" Anson drew a deep breath and threw up his hands. "One of his men was watching me. A chap named O'Malley. I tell you, I was scared out of my wits. If you knew Glebber——"

Anson broke off, forcing a smile. He seemed very young, and told the story well; almost as if it were true. Rollison had reservations about that.

"I suppose you find it hard to imagine anyone being so scared of Glebber, after the way you've handled him," Anson said.

"I'm easily frightened myself, and I didn't take to Glebber. So O'Malley was watching you, and you left the call-box; is that it?"

"Yes. I gave him the slip, sent you that message, and came out here. I thought it would be all right if you came quickly, and I had a feeling that you would. But—they got here first."

"They?"

"Glebber and O'Malley. I saw them as I turned in at the main gate. I swung the car round and took it to one of the outhouses. It was downhill, and I didn't think

they knew I'd arrived. I left the car and watched, saw you arrive—and I was hit over the head." Anson's right hand strayed to the back of his head and he rubbed it gingerly. "No wonder it hurts. I thought I was done for, but came round and found myself in a wine cellar. It took me ten minutes to realize that I was still alive! Then I was pretty cautious, and came over here by easy stages. It wasn't until I saw Glebber tied up that I realized you'd worked a miracle. Did you fix O'Malley too?"

Would he be so ingenuous if he had killed O'Malley?

"He's fixed," Rollison said.

Anson took that in his stride.

"Wonderful! I still don't know how you did it."

"Forget it," said Rollison. "Who sent all the servants away?"

"I did."

"Why?"

"I didn't want anyone to hear what I wanted to say to you. The truth is, Rollison, that I can't trust anyone. People I've known all my life might be in Glebber's pay. So I sent everyone down to one of the cottages, to do a special job. They'll start coming back soon. Er—what *are* you going to do with Glebber?"

"What's this story you want to tell me so badly?" asked Rollison.

Anson seemed to lose his immediate interest in Glebber, turned to a chair, pointed to another for Rollison and dropped down. Rollison moved towards his chair, and as he passed Anson he slipped. His hand shot out, and touched the back of Anson's head. Anson gasped, as if in pain.

"Sorry. Better let me have a look at that head," said Rollison.

Anson let him. There was a big swelling, although the skin wasn't broken. Anson hadn't lied about the blow over the head, but that didn't mean that Anson had told all the truth; and it was still possible that he had killed O'Malley.

Anson took out cigarettes.

"It can be a long story, but I'll give you the essence of it," he said. "It's about a man named Stein." He paused, but Rollison kept a poker face. "I am in a deal with Stein," Anson went on. "He was a prospector when I first met him—and he struck diamonds, back of beyond. He didn't say a word about it to anyone, but said he needed money to buy the land and start a farming project. Everyone thought he was crazy, of course. He couldn't raise the cash by the usual means. It so happened he'd known my father. He asked me for help—this was several years ago, I had plenty of money then. I put up all I could, about twelve thousand pounds. I didn't know then that it was a diamond mine he was really starting—that's gospel truth, Rollison."

Rollison nodded.

"You have to be damned careful about diamonds in South Africa. This field isn't actually in the Union, it's farther north. Anyhow, I let Stein have the money, for old time's sake, and he gave me a note-of-hand security. Not really worth the paper it was written on. I didn't think much more about it. Then early this year, I heard from him again. He said he was in a jam for cash, was going to England to try to get more, sent me a letter—about how to get to the place and told me to keep it at all costs. Then I heard from Glebber. It wasn't the first time I'd heard of Glebber—I've got around plenty, and he's notorious. Glebber had searched my flat—well, someone had. Then he sent O'Malley to see me—he asked for anything Stein had given me. First he offered to buy, then started to threaten. I told him I hadn't any papers, and Stein had fooled him. He wasn't satisfied—especially after I went to see Mrs. Stein. I wanted to find out if she knew anything about it. She lived in the Cape, then, at Hout Bay."

Rollison kept a poker face.

"She wasn't there," Anson said. "She'd packed up and left some days before I arrived. Glebber's men were watching. O'Malley actually came while I was at the house. He thought I knew where Mrs. Stein had gone,

and I couldn't convince him that he was wrong. That meant he was after her, too. I suppose he thinks Stein may have told his wife where the field is, too."

"When was this?"

"Three days ago," said Anson. "Well, Stein had said in a letter he was going to see you, and I'd heard *of* you." Anson gave a chuckle that was almost nervous. "I heard you had arrived in Cape Town, and put two and two together. I didn't know much of what was going on, had only heard from Stein once. I don't even know whether he's still in England. I do know that it's an ugly business, and Glebber's after those directions. I'm on the spot. That—that's the whole story, as far as I know it. Glebber's got me on the run, but now—what *are* you going to do with Glebber?"

"Hand him over to the police," said Rollison flatly.

Anson frowned: and when frowning, he looked nearer his age.

"I suppose that's wise."

"Why shouldn't it be?"

"Well—if he's in a corner, Glebber will probably tell the whole story. It's no fun, playing around with the diamond laws. Still—you're probably wise, if he had a go at you. He's the brains of the outfit, O'Malley's only a mouthpiece. I don't know any of the others, but I do know there are a lot of them."

"I don't see why you're worried," said Rollison.

"Well, my money's in this diamond field. I've a shocking reputation as it is, one way and another. I've played the fool a lot. If the police think that I'm playing funny stuff with diamonds——" Anson broke off.

"Why should they?"

"If you knew South Africa, you'd know why. There's a powerful diamond ring, closely protected by the law. I gave Stein money but can't prove my right to a share. I haven't even seen the place."

Rollison said softly: "Meaning, you wonder if Stein really found diamonds, or whether it's a racket. Until you know, you can't move openly."

Anson forced a laugh. "You're good, all right. Yes. I'll have to get through as best I can. Glebber might keep his mouth shut. It's worth taking a risk, just to see him in court. Well, there's the story. Er—there's just one other thing."

"What's that?"

"I'm worried about the Steins. Where has Mrs. Stein gone, and what's happened to Stein? Glebber's obviously after them both, and they might run into trouble." Anson gave the little nervous laugh again. "As a matter of fact, I really wanted to ask you to search for Mrs. Stein. I can look after myself, somehow, but——" He broke off, and shrugged, then his gaze became very direct and he asked bluntly: "Have you come over here on this affair, Rollison?"

"Yes. To look for Mrs. Stein."

"Why?"

"Stein asked me to," said Rollison.

"So he's alive!" Anson cried excitedly. "You saw him in England, and Glebber learned about it. Wonderful! I suppose he's staying safe in England while you ferret out the truth. That it?"

"That's good enough to work on," said Rollison. "Anything else you can tell me?"

"Nothing. Except that you've done me a world of good already. There's one thing——" Anson frowned. "I don't want to encourage you to underrate these people. Glebber is the big shot, but there must be others who can carry on if anything happens to him."

"We'll manage," said Rollison. "Did you know that the telephone was out of order?"

"No!" cried Anson.

He strode into the big room and to the door of the little hall, but didn't go through. He stood on the threshold, hands raised, and a curious noise coming from his throat. Rollison moved so that he could see his face. Anson's cheeks were chalk white and his eyes were feverish. The transformation had come swift as a flash; he looked a man who had suffered a terrible blow.

He was staring at the dog.

He groaned: "Ticky, Ticky!" and flung himself forward and went down on his knees. He raised the dog's head in one arm and peered at the closed eyes, then hugged the head close to him, ignoring the smears of blood. He made no other sound, but stayed there for several minutes. Then he stood up, unsteadily, like a man who was drunk.

"Who did it?" he demanded hoarsely. "Tell me who did it. I'll smash his head in! I—I'll cut him to pieces. Who was it? Was it—was it *you?*" His voice changed, he came close to Rollison, fists clenched: they opened slowly and were like great claws, ready to fasten round Rollison's throat. "Tell me who it was!" he screeched.

"A friend of Glebber's I suppose."

"Friend? Was it *Glebber?* Was it? I'll go and——"

He swung on his heel and rushed out through the front door. Rollison let him go, watched his flying figure for a few seconds, then went through the house and to the back of the gardens. He reached the car as Anson came tearing towards him, livid, wild-eyed; in a mood to do murder.

And Glebber was in the car.

"Take it easy," Rollison said. "I want the police to deal with Glebber. If you try to do it yourself, you'll find yourself hanging on the gallows, and you won't like it. Show me round. I want to find out if anyone else is here."

Anson didn't argue, but it was some time before he became more normal, and led the way through the house, and then the grounds. They found nothing, but Rollison again began to think of O'Malley's body and telling the police.

When they got back, O'Malley's body had vanished.

So someone had crept in while they had been in the grounds. Evidence of murder had gone, although the bloodstains were still there. Yet no one had tried to free Glebber.

The servants were coming back.

Rollison left in the hired car, with Glebber in the back, still bound hand and foot.

He still wasn't convinced that Anson knew nothing of O'Malley's murder; Anson was an unknown quantity, for Stein hadn't named him.

Rollison reached Cape Town a little after six o'clock, inquired of a traffic cop for the police station and was given careful directions. When he got there, he drew in to the curb, scribbled "*with Richard Rollison's compliments*" on a card and stuck it in Glebber's coat pocket, so that whoever first found him couldn't miss it. He added a postscript: "*Please return the car to the Cape Hotel.*" On one side of the card was a pencilled drawing of a top hat and a face without features—it was an old habit of the Toffs to leave that card and it still amused him.

He walked away, taking several wrong turnings before he reached Adderley Street. From there he took a taxi to the hotel. It was not yet seven. He walked up to his room, but didn't go straight in. He looked up and down the passage, and the feeling of being watched returned as strongly as he had ever known it. He unlocked his door, thrust it back swiftly and stood to one side.

Nothing happened.

He grinned to himself as he went in. He was letting his imagination run too freely; there might be an attempt to take vengeance, but he wasn't likely to be attacked in the hotel. Probably nothing would happen until Glebber had dealt with his present difficulties; and with luck, that would take a long time.

He had a bath, changed into a dinner jacket and was putting the finishing touches to his tie when the telephone bell rang. He sat on the bed and lifted the receiver.

"Hallo?"

"Mr. Rollison!" a woman said.

"Why, hallo!" cried Rollison, as if with delight. "My luck's in, I was wondering how I could get hold of the prettiest girl in Cape Town and ask her to take pity on me. Kath, I——"

"Please don't fool. Are you all right?"

"Of course I'm all right. Will you have dinner with me? I'm told that the only place is the Vineyard, but that's probably all wrong. You might be able to take me to a low dive. I'm so used to low dives that——"

"*Please* don't play the fool. I've been worried about you."

"That's quite the nicest thing I've heard you say. Come and have dinner with me, and I'll tell you the whole story —only parts of it for publication. There's one little piece I can tell you now, your editor will probably want to know. Glebber was delivered to the police station, tied up like a chicken, with an interfering Englishman's compliments."

He was smiling as he spoke; and trying to picture the girl's face.

She whispered: "*What?*"

"Now don't say that was wrong. The police are interested in him, aren't they? He's a bad man. Remember what your detective friend told you."

Kathleen Miller said: "You're incredible. I—I'd better come and see you."

"Put on a long dress."

"No, I haven't time," said Kathleen, and rang off.

Rollison regarded himself in the mirror regretfully, sighed and then changed into a lounge suit. He thought of Jolly in London, and how Jolly would disapprove of his changing again for the sake of a girl whom he hardly knew and who was not, according to Jolly's standards, in the right circle. He reminded himself again that he must write to Jolly.

Half an hour later Kathleen arrived. By then Rollison had arranged for a table in a corner, where they could see everyone and be seen by everyone, but could be overheard only by the Indian waiter and the *maître d'hôtel*, who was extremely friendly.

The girl was preoccupied. As soon as they had ordered, and Rollison had been persuaded to try South African wines, she looked at him frankly, and said:

"Was that true, about Glebber?"

"Yes."

"Who helped you?"

"My private army."

"Please, be serious."

"Glebber isn't the superman that you and the police seem to think."

"Oh, isn't he?" asked Kathleen heavily. "You'll probably find you're wrong. Exactly what happened?"

Rollison beamed.

"There was an orgy of mutual threats, until I discovered that Glebber has a weakness, and things went my way. Since you and the police were so insistent, I didn't try to deal with him myself, but handed him over. Wasn't that wise of me?"

She didn't answer. The waiter came up with smoked salmon and went away. She still didn't answer. She was worried; it would have been almost true to say that she looked frightened. Once or twice she looked away, and Rollison studied her closely, and confirmed his earlier impression: she was a delight to the eye.

Then her expression changed, and he was reminded of the way Anson had looked. She was staring towards the door; he had to turn his head to see what had affected her.

Two people were coming in. One was a woman of exceptional beauty; the other was Glebber.

Chapter VIII

NEW TACTICS

GLEBBER wore a dinner jacket, but didn't look well dressed. The coat sloped at the shoulders, the bow tie was crooked and he held his right arm stiffly, bent a little at the elbow. Rollison and the girl weren't the only couple to stare at him; but most stared covertly—including the waiters. Glebber's arrival had caused quite a sensation.

He looked towards Rollison's table; so did the woman.

She was half a head taller than Glebber, and seemed fifteen or twenty years younger, which put her somewhere near thirty. She was blonde; almost ash-blonde. She walked with easy grace, wore a low-cut black gown, with a silver fox cape. She was smiling, and she held her head high, as if proud both of her looks and of her companion. Although she glanced right and left, she acknowledged no one; nor did Glebber. He kept his gaze fixed on Rollison, who recovered quickly from the shock, smiled brightly and went on with his smoked salmon.

Kathleen's seemed to choke her.

The sensation didn't die quickly; if anything, it became a tension which Rollison couldn't fail to sense. He was partly the reason for it, Glebber's intent stare was unmistakably meant for him, and Glebber and his companion drew slowly nearer.

There was an empty table near Rollison.

The head waiter came across with a strained look in his eyes. Glebber pointed to the table and stared at

Rollison again; his eyes were like a snake's. He didn't speak. The woman smiled; and, smiling, she was a ravishing beauty. They passed.

Kath said huskily: "I knew you were lying."

"I wasn't lying, Kath. The police don't dislike Glebber as much as they say they do."

"They——" began Kathleen, but didn't finish.

Glebber and the woman sat down. They were out of earshot of whispered conversation, so Rollison kept his voice low. Did Kathleen know the woman? Yes, she was a Mrs. Dawn Godley, a widow, who lived out at Sea Point. She hadn't a good reputation, she mixed with the fastest set in town—and there had once been a rumour connecting her name with Charles Anson.

"So she knows Anson?" Rollison mused.

"Of course. He was in her set."

"And was wise enough not to let himself be hooked?"

Kathleen said: "I can't understand this. The police were so anxious to catch him." Obviously Glebber was the one thing on her mind. "Why on earth did they let him go?"

"We'll find out," said Rollison.

They finished dinner before Glebber and his companion. Before going into the lounge for coffee Kathleen telephoned the reporter on *Die Komeet* who was in close touch with the police. The answer to the question was simple enough, in essence; Glebber had "proved" that he hadn't been in Cape Town that morning and therefore could not have been the man whom Rollison had seen at Mount Street. His alibi was unbreakable, according to the police.

Apparently the murder of O'Malley was still undiscovered.

Rollison saw Kathleen to her home, at Sea Point, by taxi; then he surprised the driver by asking to be taken to Dr. Erasmus White, of District 6. White was obviously well known; the cabby did not need to ask the address.

Rollison paid him off outside the doctor's house, which was in a side street at the quiet, top end of Hanover Street. The cab disappeared, and there was only the darkness of the night, a few stars which showed through gaps in the clouds and the lights at the windows of some of the nearby houses. There was a dim light at a window of Dr. White's. Rollison stood by the gate, listening to the wind. It was howling through the narrow streets, very much more noticeable than it had been earlier in the day; the noise of the car engine had drowned most of the sound, now it came cutting up Hanover Street, and here and there eddies of dust blew up; Rollison found himself in the midst of one, and closed his eyes to keep out the dust.

He looked round again.

That feeling of being watched was ever-present—but he could see no one. He could imagine the men at the corners; imagine that Glebber had had him followed everywhere he had gone, and knew that he was here. That was probably a bad thing; it might get the coloured doctor into Glebber's bad books. Rollison took the chance, and turned towards the front door. He found the bell, after much groping. A sudden gust of wind came howling about him, drowning the sound of the bell. He stood with his back to the door, half afraid that a shadowy form would leap out of the darkness towards him.

Except for the wind, there was no sound.

The door opened.

"Good evening," said Dr. Erasmus White.

He stood framed against the light inside the house, which made him look large. His voice was soft and pleasant. He held the door with one hand and peered forward, although Rollison was quite sure that he knew who had come; everyone nearby probably knew that by now.

"Good evening," said Rollison. "Can you spare me a few minutes?"

"You are the gentleman I saw this morning?"

"Yes. My name is Rollison."

"Your name and your picture were in the *Argus* this evening." White stood aside. "Please come in."

He closed the door before putting on another light, which shone on plain walls, and several pieces of highly polished furniture; there was a smell of furniture polish. Then he led the way into a front room. There was nothing remarkable about the furnishings: a square of carpet on polished boards, some easy chairs, a few pictures and photographs on the walls and, in one corner, a desk which was filled with papers, all neatly arranged. Dr. White went across and drew the yellow curtains, then offered Rollison a chair. In this light he looked very dark, and there were lines, as of anxiety and worry, on his face.

He didn't sit down himself.

"How can I help you?"

"How is George?"

"You are kind to inquire. He will recover."

"Has he talked yet?"

"Of what?"

"Of why he was attacked."

"I don't know whether he has said much of importance to the police. I think it unlikely, because he is just a lad who was employed by evil men, to run errands. He has been removed from my care. Another doctor is looking after him."

"A police doctor?"

"Another doctor," repeated White gently. "I do not know whether he works for the police or not. He is a European."

"I see. How old is George?"

White hesitated, then went to a chair and sat down. Rollison offered cigarettes.

"Thank you, I do not smoke. Please smoke yourself. Mr. Rollison, why are you asking all these questions? What is your interest in the boy? Don't you think he has suffered enough?"

"Too much. I'd like to help him."

"How do you think you could do that?"

"I shan't know, until I know his circumstances."

Dr. White shrugged his shoulders, as if he could not understand this, and answered quietly:

"He is an intelligent boy, Mr. Rollison. He has worked in several positions, and for some time he was at Kimberley and later at Johannesburg, at the mines. He has also been a tailor and a mechanic. He was of excellent character, and was in no trouble of any kind, until he accepted work for a European whom I did not trust. Many are good, very good. This man——"

"Who was he?"

"It would not be wise for me to name him, and I do not see how it would affect you."

Rollison said: "All right. George worked for O'Malley and Glebber, and then his troubles began."

White almost managed to hide his surprise behind his dark, impassive countenance; almost, but not quite. Rollison sat smiling faintly, and smoking. White stood up and began to walk about the room.

"Mr. Rollison, I confess that you make me uneasy. You know so much. You have already met people who will not do George or any of my friends any good. This man O'Malley. This Glebber. They are a bad influence in this district. They encourage the gangs. They work on all that is bad in the people."

"Are you sure?"

"It is what I am told."

"You shouldn't believe everything that you hear," said Rollison.

"There is much I can believe. Mr. Rollison, I am in an unusual position here. I am fortunate to have the respect of most people. I do my work as best I can, and that is understood by all. I do not interest myself in the reasons for troubles—my task is to help relieve suffering. Please understand that I cannot become involved in anything which is outside my own sphere. It would not be right."

"It would be crazy." Rollison stubbed out his cigarette. "George worked for O'Malley as a runner—is that it?"

"Yes. He was an innocent tool. I know that he is a good boy."

"Do you know why he was attacked?"

"No."

"What will he do when he comes out of hospital?"

White shrugged. "Perhaps he will get work. He will try. If not—then he will perhaps mix with the wrong people again. In any case, it should be no concern of yours."

"I'll be in South Africa for some time. I need a servant."

White narrowed his eyes, but made no reply.

"Someone who knows the country, can drive a car, who speaks English and who won't be lazy. George measures up to all this, doesn't he?"

"I wish I could understand your interest."

"I've told you all I can. Would you recommend George as trustworthy?"

"Yes," said White slowly. "Yes, I believe he would be loyal. I wish that he could be given a chance to prove that he is a good boy. He speaks English fairly well, but —would you lead him into trouble, Mr. Rollison?"

"Possibly. I might also lead him out of it. He hasn't much chance, unless someone does, has he?"

"No," said White softly. "No. I will speak to him, when he is out of hospital. That should be in four or five days. He will not be fully recovered, of course, and—the police may not allow him to remain free. It is not easy for a coloured youth who earns their displeasure."

Rollison said: "We'll see how it goes, Dr. White." He stood up. "Do you know anything about a man named Stein?"

"I knew him as a name."

"Did you know his wife?"

"No. I do not move in those circles, please understand. I would be helpful if I could."

"I'm sure," said Rollison. "Now, can you get me a taxi?"

"I will drive you——"

"A taxi, please," said Rollison.

Dr. White bowed, and went to the telephone.

Twenty minutes later Rollison was entering the hotel. There was a message: Mr. Anson had telephoned and would call again later. Rollison had a drink, by himself,

knew that most of the people in the lounge had recognized him from the picture in the *Argus*, and remembered that there was a copy of the paper in his room. He went upstairs, a little before eleven. He paused outside his door, laughed at those nameless fears which had made him enter so cautiously before—and took exactly the same precautions again. Nothing happened.

He went in.

Mrs. Dawn Godley smiled up at him from an armchair.

The only light on was subdued, and in it her beauty was astounding. She was dressed exactly as she had been in the dining-room. She didn't get up. She had a figure in a thousand, and didn't need telling so. Her smile seemed free and friendly, there was nothing mysterious about her manner, only about her presence.

Rollison closed the door.

"Well, well! Life's always full of surprises, and not often as pleasant as this. Will you have a drink?"

She gave a deep, pleasant laugh.

"It takes a great deal to startle you, doesn't it?"

"Startle? Well, I suppose so. After all, why be startled when a dream is waiting for one? You are a dream, aren't you? You can't be real." He offered cigarettes. "What about that drink?"

"No, thank you."

"Been drinking too much so as to keep pace with Glebber?" Rollison flicked his lighter, and bent very close to her. "Didn't anyone warn you about Glebber? He's a bad man. Very bad. Not good for innocent young women to know. You might find your reputation ruined, and I'd hate that."

"I'm sure you would." Her eyes were green, with amber flecks. "I shouldn't worry, I can look after my own reputation. Didn't the reporter girl tell you how notorious I am?"

"Great Scott, no! She was ogling you enviously. Er—shall I ask why you've come, or is it best just to take things as they are?"

"I'm going to tell you."

"Wait a minute," said Rollison hastily. "Let me guess. Glebber is trying new tactics. He hasn't made a flattering impression on me, so he's using you. Wise man. You are to tell me how foolish I am to waste my time fighting Glebber. He has a charmed life. Why don't I give up the chase, and enjoy myself? And after all, why not enjoy myself with you? Glebber is quite prepared to lend you out for a few evenings. Right?"

Until the last sentence, she had been smiling; the smile disappeared. She looked at him levelly, but her lips were set tightly.

"So you think that's clever."

"Asking for an apology?"

"No," she said slowly. "But I expected something better from an English aristocrat."

"You've probably got wrong impressions about aristocrats and Englishmen," murmured Rollison. "Just look on me as a human being. An average mixture with some ideas you and Glebber might think quixotic. I don't know how much Glebber has told you. He arranged the murder of a man in London, and is trying to get his dirty claws on the dead man's property. Simple enough. Nothing in it will surprise you. Glebber is muck. Anyone who touches Glebber's business is going to get dirty. It's a pity."

"I see," said Dawn Godley. "And the man Glebber murdered had appealed to you for help, had he?"

"That's right."

"Are you sure he was worth it?"

"Not yet. I'd like some evidence before deciding that he wasn't."

"If you go on with this affair you'll get all the evidence you'll want—more than enough to make you regret that you ever championed the cause of Mr. Stein. I knew Stein." She sounded bitter; and she sounded sincere. Already it was becoming apparent that Mrs. Godley was not simply what she seemed—Glebber's cat's paw. She had a quality all her own, as unmistakable as her beauty.

Rollison felt sorry for her; and he knew himself well enough to know that mood as dangerous.

"All right," he said. "I'm helping a dead man who wasn't much good. What about Mrs. Stein?"

"I didn't know her. I pitied her."

Rollison waited, but the woman didn't go on.

He said lazily: "We aren't making a lot of progress, but perhaps we're clearing the air. Glebber wants me to drop out and is nervous of what might happen if he has to rub me out, so he's using a charming means of persuasion. It won't work."

She eyed him steadily, and her eyes were beautiful.

"You're making a mistake," she said quietly. "I hope you won't suffer too much. I think we could get on—even if I am soiled by knowing Glebber." She drew in her breath. "You don't think I *like* the man, do you?"

"I don't know."

"Well, I don't. But I fear him."

Rollison moved forward, put a hand on her forearm and squeezed. "How does Glebber keep his hold on you? What's he got against you? Didn't you know it's a bad thing to submit to blackmail?"

She didn't answer.

"When is he expecting you back?" asked Rollison.

"When I arrive," she said, and stood up suddenly, thrusting his arm aside; but it wasn't because she resented the touch, for she took his hands and held them tightly, and her eyes blazed into his. "Don't be a fool. Get out while you can. Glebber's playing cautiously. You've hurt him and you've worried him. He won't stand that for long. He'll kill. Don't make any mistake, he'll *kill*."

Rollison murmured: "Or get killed."

"Oh, you fool! You've no idea what he can do."

"I've some idea." Rollison returned the pressure of her fingers, and drew her closer. "Listen to me. You say you don't like Glebber but you have to be loyal to him. Why? In the long run, he'll throw you aside, as he's thrown others aside. You'll serve a useful purpose for a while, and after that—out you go. You know it as well as I do. Now

you've a chance, which might be your last, of getting away from him and giving yourself another break."

She didn't answer.

"It would be worth plenty to have a spy in Glebber's camp," Rollison went on. "Think you could be one?"

She still didn't answer; and he wasn't sure of the meaning of her expression.

"Think about it," urged Rollison. "Tell Glebber you've made some progress and need more time. Tell him that I've already shown signs of submitting to your charms. Tell him anything you like, so long as you make him believe it."

She drew a deep breath.

"So you're asking me to help you?"

"That's right."

"What makes you think you could trust me?"

"I shall live and learn. There's a nice look in your eyes. I've a feeling that you haven't had the best of deals, and that's hard. Try it my way. String Glebber along. You've no idea where it might take you."

She shivered.

"I'd know where it would take me if I were fool enough to do it, and Glebber found out."

"Don't be fool enough to let Glebber find out," said Rollison mildly. "He is not omnipotent, even if he did find a way of pulling the wool over the eyes of the police."

"It's impossible," she said.

"Sleep on it," suggested Rollison. He looked at his watch, and pretended to be astonished. "My dear, it's late. Much too late. How are you going to get back? Can I take you anywhere?"

"I'll be all right," she said, and went towards the door. He expected her to make another attempt to persuade him to drop his interest in the case, but she didn't. He opened the door for her, and she went out without looking at him again. He watched her go along the passage and turn down the stairs; and she still didn't look round.

He went into his room and closed the door slowly.

It was a beautiful morning. Rollison looked out of his window and saw the mountain clear of mist, brilliant in the sun and against the blue sky. He had tea and two cigarettes in bed, dressed slowly and lazily and looked through the *Cape Times*. There was no report of O'Malley's murder; presumably the body still hadn't been found. He wished he could read Afrikaans, but he would have to get someone else to translate the story in *Die Komeet* for him.

He felt at peace with the world.

There were several letters, most of them from people who claimed to know friends of friends and hoped that he would have time to visit them; two were invitations for week-ends at holiday places on the Cape. A photograph agency offered its services. Nothing was startling or alarming. He went down to breakfast, smiling amiably at all who acknowledged him. He did not let himself think about what had happened or what was likely to happen. He felt that he could sit back and wait for Glebber's next move; he doubted whether it would be drastic. After breakfast he telephoned the detective agency, and learned only what Anson had told him—Mrs. Stein had left her house at Hout Bay some time ago, and not returned. They were still trying to trace her. Rollison thanked the agency, reflecting wryly that he had come to Africa to look for Mrs. Stein. He asked if there were any new murders, flippantly, and was told there had been two —of coloured boys by coloureds. Nothing was said of O'Malley.

Rollison took the hired car, which the police had obligingly returned, for a drive round the mountain; he was not followed.

He was back soon after eleven, and went for an hour's walk; he was not followed then, either.

He heard nothing from Kathleen Miller and nothing from Anson.

He lunched alone, and the sense of security lingered. He knew that it was a false sense; he was sitting on a volcano which would blow up when he least expected

it. He made no inquiries about the boy George or Dr. White; he could await events with them, too. He found himself thinking more about Dawn Godley than about anyone else, and contrasted her with Kathleen Miller; neither really suffered in the comparison.

He was called to the telephone just after two o'clock.

It was Anson; an excited Anson.

"Rollison, I must see you. I've some news—I think I've discovered where Mrs. Stein is. Can you come right away?"

Rollison said: "Where to?"

"The farm."

Rollison hesitated.

"I know it's a hell of a nerve to expect you to come rushing out again, but I can't get to town," Anson said. "I must stay here, I'm expecting a message any minute. If it's the news I want, I'll be able to tell you where Mrs. Stein is. Will you come?"

Rollison decided. "Yes," he said. "Don't vanish this time."

He left in the hired car ten minutes later. For the first time that day he was followed.

Chapter IX

DISCOVERY AT THE FARM

He drove fast, but not so fast as to outdistance the car behind. It was a new Chrysler with a fine turn of speed. He could see the driver in the mirror, and knew that he had a companion; he didn't know whether the companion was a man or a woman. He made no attempt to slip them today. He passed the spot where he had knocked out Glebber's man and wondered whether Glebber was returning to the battle; he didn't think so.

He swung off the National road near Paarl, seeing the sun shining on the white houses of the town, and then drove fast along the winding road towards Stellenbosch, beneath the grandeur of the mountains. He remembered most of the bends, and knew that he would soon reach a spot where the road wound round the foothills, with a number of blind corners: so he went more carefully. On the laps between the bends he was out of sight of the other car, but now and again caught sight of it in the driving mirror; he still didn't know who the passenger was—but it was a woman.

He turned a corner fairly slowly.

He jammed on his brakes, and a spasm of fear shot through him, like a slash from a whip. Lying across the road was the trunk of a tree. There was no way of avoiding it, except by going close to the edge; from there the drop was sheer for hundreds of feet. He pulled towards it, but not too far, and braked as gently as he dared, his pace hadn't been slow enough for this.

He knew stark fear.

His nearside wheel struck the tree, and the car jolted and swayed over towards the brink of the road. For a wild moment he thought that it was going over; then it steadied. He came to a standstill just in front of the tree trunk; the trunk of an oak tree, with some of the branches lopped off. He was in a cold sweat. He knew that the other car wasn't far behind him, so forced himself to act, and pressed his horn; the sound blared out, loud and clear, warning the oncoming driver. He watched the mirror, but the car didn't appear.

He lit a cigarette, and climbed out. He couldn't resist looking over the edge; it could not have been more sheer. He moved away, smoking, smoothing down his hair, thinking harsh things of Glebber and harsher things of himself. He had taken Glebber too much for granted, this action was drastic enough.

He didn't doubt that the oak tree had been placed there as a welcome to him. He could see where it had been pushed down the bank; stones and dirt lay on the road. Other felled trees were on the hillside, but no one appeared to be working. The timing had been excellent, although any poor devil coming too fast round that corner would have gone over, without a chance to save himself.

The other car didn't show up, and that was surprising; it hadn't been more than half a mile behind. He remembered a turning off the main road, which probably explained it. He studied the tree. It was too large for him to pull aside, he would have to wait for help.

Had Anson known about this?

Had Anson sent for him on Glebber's instructions? Or had he sent for Rollison and then been forced to tell Glebber or Glebber's men what he had done? It was impossible to be sure, but the question mark he had put against Anson's name was now much larger.

The only sound was the gentle rustle of the wind and the singing of birds. Below him stretched the gentle hills,

with vineyards stretching out almost as far as the eye could see.

Then he heard a sound, not far away: a thud. He looked round, and saw nothing. A moment later there was another thud, and this time he saw a big stone hit the road and bounce over the edge. He glanced up, and saw a man not far above him, with another stone, ready to throw. He jumped forward, but there was little cover, and he made a mistake in going forward; he should have squeezed between the car and the edge of the road. The third stone hit the ground only a few inches in front of him—and then a smaller one caught him on the side of the head. The force was so great that he staggered forward, with his hand in his pocket, the fingers clutching the butt of Glebber's gun. Another stone caught him on the shoulder, sent excruciating pain through it and forced him to relax his hold on the gun. He was close to the car, but he couldn't hurry, it was too close to the edge; if he misjudged the distance he would go over. He actually touched the back of the car when a stone caught him on the leg. He staggered sideways towards the edge.

He grabbed the car bumper.

That broke his fall, although his feet went over the edge, and the earth gave beneath him. His legs dropped. He was clutching the bumper at one side, and his grip held, but the pain at his shoulder, as his full weight was taken by his right arm, made his gasp.

He hung there without moving.

There was pain in his leg as well as in his shoulder, and his head was spinning. It would have been bad enough by itself; but there was the man hurling stones, a man who knew he was helpless—and almost certainly one of those who had dragged the tree across the road. He might come to finish his job.

Rollison forced himself to assess his chances.

His face was close to the earth just beneath the road; at the top the drop wasn't quite so sheer as it had looked. If he let go, there would be a chance of coming up against one of several small trees, and a risk of rolling

down until the drop was sheer. If he did that he would be badly injured at best; dead, at worst. He had to hold on—if he could.

He got his left arm up, and gripped the side of the road. That was better, provided the earth didn't crumble. He hauled himself up a little, until the top of his head was level with the road itself, but he couldn't see over.

Then he felt an agonizing pain on his left hand; someone had hit or kicked it. He let go. Now he was hanging by his right, injured arm. Sweat broke out on his forehead. Every moment he expected to feel a blow on the other hand, and if that came——

He heard a shout.

He hung there, helpless, as the shout was repeated; then there were sounds, as of people running. He couldn't be sure. More voices were raised, and then some earth fell over the edge, not on to him, but a few yards to one side. He was just holding the bumper.

He looked upwards.

A head appeared, then a face—the head and face of Kathleen Miller. He saw her clearly, framed against the blue sky. A young man was with her.

She called unsteadily:

"Hold on. You must hold on."

He nodded.

She disappeared with the man. The sound of footsteps had died away. He tried to make himself think of what she had done, that would at least take his mind off the danger; and he knew that if he let go, he would almost certainly be dashed to death. She had been in the following car, of course; that had been delayed—probably whoever had put the tree across the road had managed to delay the other car. He had been lucky; he ought to be dead.

The man's head and shoulders appeared.

"Hold on." The man wriggled forward, then put his hand towards Rollison; soon, he was gripping Rollison's wrist. "Get your feet against the side. Must get you up farther than that."

Rollison grunted.

It wasn't easy to push his toes against the side of the hill, and then get a purchase strong enough to force himself up; but he managed it. The man pulled at the same time. Soon Rollison's head was above the level of the road, by the nearside back wing and bumper. Kathleen was now on her knees by the edge, leaning forward dangerously. She had a rope in her hands. She bent still lower, and managed to put a loop of the rope over his shoulders. He put an arm through; at least he couldn't fall now, unless they let go.

"Now we're going to pull," the man said. "Dig your toes into the earth and help as much as you can. Ready?"

"Ready," Rollison grunted.

He sat on the trunk of the tree which had nearly brought disaster, pale, breathing hard. The young man had a whisky flask. Rollison took a sip, then Kathleen lit a cigarette for him: there was a smear of lipstick on the end. He was in a cold sweat still, but forced a grin.

No one else had come along.

The others didn't ask questions, but the man said:

"I'm from the newspaper. Lucky thing for you we decided to try to get a story. We thought you'd taken a side turning, or we'd have been here earlier. Kath will wait with you. I'll get some help."

Rollison murmured: "Thanks."

He was left alone with the girl, who looked at him intently and with that earnestness which was characteristic. She had looked good before, but never so good as now. The wind blew her hair a little, and there was heightened colour in her cheeks. He guessed what she was thinking, and wondered how long it would be before she put the thoughts into words.

He said: "Thanks, Kath. I'll remember this."

"*Now* are you satisfied?" she demanded in a hard voice.

"Well, hardly. But——"

"If you stay on this job, you'll get killed."

"I've a lot of lives left."

"You'll never escape. I've warned you time and time again. Oh, I know it's hateful for anyone to say 'I told you so', but I did. You musn't try to fight Glebber."

Rollison didn't answer.

"Do you hear me?" she demanded almost shrilly.

"Yes, Kath. But aren't you forgetting something? I've a personal score to pay off now. Before, it was just a matter of digging out a bad man. Now——"

"It doesn't matter what you say. You'll do no good and may do a lot of harm if you keep on. Why did you come out here again today?"

Rollison didn't answer.

The girl stood up. "Oh, it's a waste of time talking. Did —did Anson ask you to come and see him again?"

"I thought it would be a good idea to have another chat with him." Rollison took another sip of whisky, and stood up. He wasn't very steady on his feet, but it was hot in the sun, and by the bank was shade from a bush. He moved across and leaned against the bank, while the girl stared at him moodily. At heart she knew that nothing she could say would move him, and she was desperately disappointed.

They heard a car engine.

"More help," said Rollison. "Forget it, Kath. But, after this, you can rely on getting as much of the story as I can tell you. Later."

He smiled at her.

She swung round on her heel and went towards the oncoming car. Her fellow reporter was sitting next to the driver.

Rollison's car was damaged too badly to be driven off. The two men and Kathleen managed to push it into the side of the road, a few yards from the corner, before other motorists arrived, and the tree was dragged to the side. By then Rollison was looking and feeling much better; his hand and shoulder were painful, one from a kick, the other from a stone; they would be stiff for a few days, but nothing more.

"Do you still want to go to Hersch Farm?" Kathleen asked in a stony voice.

"Please."

"Oh, you're impossible!"

"Yes, I know," said Rollison. "Why don't you take me as I am, Kath? And why worry so much about me? My murder would give you some good headlines, and you'd be able to tell the world how well you knew me. It's bad reporting to try to stop a story from developing."

"I don't want to see you dead."

"Nice of you," Rollison murmured, and took her hand. "Don't worry. Take me along to see Anson."

"I suppose I can't stop you from going, so I may as well come with you," Kathleen said.

The farm looked delightful, with the canopy of trees in front and the mountains behind. The sun shone on the white buildings, and made them dazzling white. Two big dogs were standing in the shade, and several coloured servants were moving about the garden; two were standing beneath a tree, and looked for all the world as if they were asleep. Rollison pulled up near the front door, which opened quickly, and Anson appeared.

He rushed down the steps as Rollison got out of the car.

"I wondered where you'd got to. I——" He stopped abruptly when he saw the bruises on Rollison's face and the blood on his hand. "Great Scott, have you had a spill?"

"Yes. We'll worry about that later. Meet my rescuers." Kathleen and her companion had got out, too; the lean-flanked young man's name proved to be de Beer. Anson looked puzzled.

"Er—we've met somewhere before, Miss Miller, haven't we?"

"Miss Miller and Mr. de Beer are from the Press," Rollison said drily.

Anson gulped, darted a startled look at Rollison, started to say something, then bit his lip. Rollison winked at the girl, thanked her gravely for bringing him here

safely—and said that he would be able to make his own way back. Anson wished them good-bye faintly, and then followed Rollison indoors. The two reporters did not go to their car at once, but moved towards one of the wine cellars.

Anson stood by a window, watching them.

"Why on earth did you bring the Press?" he breathed.

"They followed me. If they hadn't, I should have been a corpse."

"What?"

"Fact. You've some strong men in the district who think nothing of rolling oak trees across the road in front of reckless drivers. What's the news about Mrs. Stein?"

"The message hasn't arrived," said Anson. "I don't mind telling you that I hope it doesn't until those reporters have gone. I don't trust the Press." He looked as if he blamed Rollison for having brought them, then braced his shoulders and said: "But we'd better give you some first aid. This way."

Half an hour later, with his hand bandaged and his bruised shoulder rubbed with embrocation, Rollison sat in the big room and drank tea. The peacefulness of the farmhouse lingered; it was very different from the fierce activity of the previous afternoon. The reporters had driven off, and from then onwards Anson had seemed much more himself. He told the story simply and it was hard to believe that he knew that O'Malley had died in this room.

He had made inquiries from a number of people about Mrs. Stein, and one—an inquiry agent—had telephoned just before Anson had called Rollison, to say that he thought he knew where she was. If the man were right, she was in a small hotel at Oudtshoorn, two or three hundred miles away. The man was checking up by telephone, and had promised to report to Anson that afternoon.

"And if she's there, what do you propose to do?" demanded Rollison.

"Go to Oudtshoorn, of course."

Rollison said drily: "And tell all the world that you think you're going to find something useful there. I shouldn't. I'd have the hotel watched and Mrs. Stein looked after—that's all, for the time being."

Anson frowned.

"I see your point. On the other hand——" He broke off.

"Yes?" asked Rollison abruptly.

"Well, Mrs. Stein may have those directions to the field, and if Glebber catches up with her——"

Rollison said roughly: "When are you going to tell the truth, Anson? What's Mrs. Stein got? What's the racket?"

"I've told you all I know. It's dangerous. Anything to do with a diamond field is dangerous out here—and I'm not sure I can trust Stein."

Rollison said heavily: "Anson, the truth is that Stein was mixed up with the Illicit Diamond Buying business, and smuggled a good hoard of diamonds out. He's hidden them somewhere. These directions tell where they are. That's about the size of it, isn't it? This talk about a find in some other part of Africa is all my eye and Betty Martin. Let's have the truth. You're in I.D.B. up to your neck and are afraid of being found out by the police. Well?" He barked the word as he stood up and gripped the lapels of Anson's coat. "Well? What's the truth?"

Anson closed his eyes, but didn't speak.

Rollison shook him—and felt a twinge of pain in his shoulder. He let the man go, and stood back. He couldn't make Anson out. Sometimes he behaved with great courage, at others his nerve seemed to flop. Was he acting part of the time? If so, why should he put up an act?

He stood there with his eyes closed long after Rollison had let him go.

"Well?" Rollison said again.

Anson drew a deep breath.

"Everything I've told you is true, except one thing. There's a map of these new diggings. It's in two halves. I've got one half, Mrs. Stein may have the other. I don't know, but that's my guess. I can't find the place without

both halves of the map. There's another thing. Stein was mixed up with Glebber in some dirty business, I think. If the police get to know I was a partner in that business —— Oh, hell! Rollison, until I find that map and make sure these diamond fields are genuine, and it's not a racket, I'm dead scared of the police. I—I need my share of that find, if it's genuine. I staked Stein. I'm nearly broke now. I *need* my share. I don't propose to cheat anyone—half is Stein's and he's welcome to it. But if Glebber gets hold of that map——"

Anson broke off.

The story was so simple and so old that it was more plausible than anything Anson had said before. A secret diamond field—or a cache of stolen or smuggled gems. A map torn in half, a search for the halves, murder, cold-blooded crime. Anson believed that the fortune was there, so did Glebber, or he wouldn't have gone to these lengths. Moreover, Anson had talked as if he believed that Stein was alive. Glebber, of course, had thought Stein had given his half of the map to Rollison—that was what he had been after at Mount Street. Now Glebber probably realized Rollison hadn't got Stein's half, and was after Mrs. Stein. Rollison let these reflections drift through his mind while he watched Anson, and guessed that Anson was feeling desperate.

Was that simply because he needed money so badly?

"I've told you the truth," Anson said tensely. "I can't tell you anything else."

"You can. Did Glebber know I was coming here this afternoon?"

"I don't see how he could have."

"Did anyone hear you speak to me on the telephone?"

"I—I don't think so." Anson's eyes were shadowed, as if with bewilderment. "I've told you before that I can't really trust anyone, even servants I've employed for years. Glebber either bribes them or frightens them into giving him what he wants. Now the Press—these *Die Komeet* people——"

"They pulled me out of trouble."

"Do they know anything?"

"They guess plenty, and they know Glebber's involved."

"I hope they don't guess too much," said Anson. "I think I've seen the girl about before. Nice-looking, isn't she?"

"Very. So is Dawn Godley."

Anson jerked up, looked astounded, then gradually relaxed and lit a cigarette without offering his case to Rollison.

"What—what do you know about Dawn?"

"She was once a friend of yours and is now a friend of Glebber's."

"Oh," said Anson weakly. "I don't know what's happened to Dawn lately. I—I was going to marry her. A couple of years ago. We fell out. I couldn't go on with it, I—— Anyhow, I lost practically all my money, and Dawn wouldn't have been interested in a pauper." He was bitter. "Don't know why I'm telling you this," he muttered. "Have you—met her?"

"Yes. Like her?"

"There was a time when I would have said you could trust Dawn with anything, but since she's taken up with Glebber, I'm not so sure. Be careful of her."

"Oh, I'll be careful." Rollison looked at his watch. "This message is taking a long time coming through, isn't it? Sure it was genuine?"

"Oh, yes. I *can* trust some people. Er—this was a friend of mine. He knows how anxious I am to find Mrs. Stein, because she may have the other half of the map. He doesn't know what the map's about. He's quite reliable," Anson insisted. "He drove to Oudtshoorn, should be there by now. He was going to have a look at the woman and let me know if it is really Mrs. Stein. There isn't much doubt."

"I see. Where's your half of the map?"

Anson said stubbornly: "I'm not going to tell you and I'm not going to tell anyone. I——"

He broke off at a sound which Rollison heard only vaguely; but it alarmed him. Anson strode towards the

window and pulled aside the net curtains. Now Rollison heard someone call out, and he saw a boy rushing towards the house, a coloured boy, racing like mad.

By the time he arrived Anson had opened the door and was on the stoop.

"What is it? What is it?"

The boy jabbered in a language which Rollison didn't understand; but Anson did, and Anson's cheeks lost colour as he listened, he was deathly pale as he turned to Rollison.

"He's found a dead man—in one of the vats," he muttered.

Chapter X

DEAD MAN

Rollison followed Anson into the cellar. Actually it was mostly built above the ground, although part of it was below ground level. Outside it was freshly painted white. Inside it was gloomy but clean. Large hose pipes lay on the ground, right along its full length. On one side were half a dozen vats, huge wooden barrels which towered above Rollison's head; on the other were cement storage tanks.

The body was in one of the tanks.

There was a small opening in each tank, rather like the stokehole of a big boiler. A man's head showed in the third opening. At first glance it didn't seem large enough for a body to enter—but the body was certainly inside. The hair was matted with blood, but some of it showed gingery—and Rollison knew that he had found O'Malley.

The frightened coloured boy was still jabbering away.

"Be quiet, Daniel," Anson said. He gulped as he looked at Rollison. "He got inside, to clean it out—it was emptied a couple of weeks ago, the fumes have all gone—and stumbled over the body. He couldn't scramble out fast enough."

"I don't blame him," said Rollison. "But how did he get in?"

"There's plenty of room, if you get your shoulders in first. I've done it myself." Anson looked down at the bloodstained head. "You—do you know who I think that is?"

"Let's have him out before we start guessing."

"All right," said Anson. "I'll have to get inside. It's no use asking Daniel. It's no use asking him to keep quiet about this, either, he'll tell everyone, it'll be all over the place before the night's out. I——"

"You can face it," said Rollison sharply. "Get me a torch, I want to see if I can get inside there."

"No—don't——"

"Torch, please," said Rollison.

Anson spoke quickly to the coloured boy, who hurried off and returned with a torch a few minutes later. Meanwhile, Rollison had looked about the cellar, and Anson had shown him where the grapes were crushed, the first tanks into which the juice went, for fermenting, and the way in which it was delivered to the tanks. This was a small farm, he said, and the total storage capacity was less than fifty thousand gallons. It was now his main means of livelihood.

The torch arrived.

Rollison went down on his knees, pushed the head inside, then thrust his arm in and pushed the body out of the way. Next, he put the torch through the hole, and put his head inside; there was a curiously potent smell of wine, which went to his head. He didn't withdraw but wriggled until his shoulders were through the gap; after that, it was easy to pull himself through.

A dim light came from the entrance, but the rest was just a dark void.

He groped for and found the torch and switched it on. The bright beam of light carved a way through the darkness, shining on the bare walls and the damp floor; when he moved forward he found his feet slipping. He satisfied himself that there was nothing else in here, then switched the light on to O'Malley. He was much as Rollison had seen him before, except that his head looked worse and his clothes were full of dust.

His head had lain in the damp for some time, the blood had become fluid again; that was why there was so much on his hair.

Rollison knelt down, and began to thrust his shoulders through the hole.

It was an hour before O'Malley lay in the passage between the vats and the storage tanks.

"Now we'd better tell the police," said Rollison.

He knew before he uttered the words that Anson was going to protest.

Anson said: "Rollison, if the police come here and find that body, they'll take me for questioning. They'll have to. He was obviously killed on my premises, and it's known that we were on bad terms. Once they start making inquiries they'll stumble on part of the truth. They'll have every right to search my papers, and they might come across that map. Can't—can't we take the body somewhere else?"

"And supposing we did?"

"I'd gain time, anyhow."

"And get yourself hanged. Daniel will talk, won't he? Remember saying so? It'll be all over the place by nightfall, and in Cape Town by the morning. If you hide the body, then you'll tell the police you've a guilty conscience. Please yourself, of course, but——"

"I can't stand police investigation just now!"

"Just tell them what you've found."

"I just can't stand being questioned by the police yet!" Anson looked ill—and much older. "Rollison, this is getting a worse mess than ever, I don't know what I should have done if you hadn't come."

"I can't help, if you act the fool. Figure it out for yourself and telephone the police."

Rollison turned towards the door of the store cellar, and narrowed his eyes against the bright sunshine. Anson followed and led the way towards the house. The telephone had been repaired, and Anson talked quickly to the police in Cape Town; there was a measure of authority in his voice, which hinted at the man he had been—and probably could become again. That took less than ten minutes.

He turned to Rollison.

"You were right—I feel better about it already. I'm just going upstairs—won't be long. What will you do?"

"Wait for the police."

"Fine!" Anson hurried off.

Rollison sat on the stoop at the front of the house, and pondered. Anson was behaving like a man with a heavy burden on his conscience, and it might be because he had killed O'Malley; on the other hand, he certainly hadn't dragged O'Malley's body out yesterday afternoon. Some of his servants might be in Glebber's pay, but if that were the answer, who had killed O'Malley, and why?

Rollison watched the stairs—and wasn't surprised to see Anson creeping down with a suitcase in his hand. Rollison went forward.

Anson said defensively:

"I can't risk seeing the police yet."

"Well, it's your risk," said Rollison. "There's one little thing you can do for me."

"Just say the word."

"Good. Give me your half of the map."

Rollison smiled lazily, and the sun shone into his eyes, making them glint, giving emphasis to the strength within him. Anson backed a pace, and let his suitcase fall. A bird flew swiftly across the stoep and vanished among the trees.

"You're—you're not serious."

"Try me."

"I—I wouldn't let anyone have it."

"Supposing Glebber catches you? The first thing he'll do is search your pockets and your baggage, and he'll find it."

"What makes you think I'd be fool enough to carry it around with me?"

"You certainly wouldn't leave it for the police to find when they search here." Rollison held out his hand. "Over to me, it'll be much safer."

"You're crazy!"

"You were going to come round to that opinion sooner

or later, so it doesn't make much difference," said Rollison. "Either you'll hand it over or I'll take it from you."

He looked as if he meant it; his chin was thrust out, his lips were curved, the glint was still in his eyes. His tall, lean body was relaxed, but could spring into action at any moment; and Anson realized that. The younger man hesitated for what seemed a long time.

Then he smashed a blow at Rollison's head, missed, turned, grabbed the suitcase and ran.

Rollison didn't trouble to follow; he had satisfied himself that Anson had the other half of the map and would take steps to make sure that no one else could get it.

He watched the youngster disappearing.

Then he smiled with sheer enjoyment, for he saw another young man, de Beer, stalking Anson. The reporters of *Die Komeet* hadn't gone far. They had missed the discovery of the body but weren't going to lose Anson.

Half an hour later the police arrived—two local men and one from Cape Town. They asked a lot of questions, made little comment even about Anson's disappearance, took possession of the farm and stationed a guard over the cellar, then they arranged for the body to be taken to Cape Town.

Rollison sat next to the driver; dead O'Malley was laid out on the rear seat.

It was nearly seven o'clock before Rollison reached the hotel; there were no messages. He went up to his room and telephoned the manager; could he tell him where Mrs. Dawn Godley could be found? The manager was able to help. . . .

Rollison telephoned Mrs. Godley, who lived in a service flat at Sea Point. He was prepared to be answered by a servant; instead, the woman herself spoke. The telephone gave an added attractiveness to her voice, and she sounded young and carefree.

"Hallo," said Rollison brightly. "This is an old friend of

yours, the man you confused with the English aristocracy. Remember?"

She paused—and then laughed.

"Yes, I remember."

"Will you dine with me tonight?"

"You're very kind," said Dawn mockingly.

"Just glamour-struck. Will you?"

She laughed again. "Yes, I'd like to."

"Fine. Vineyard, in one hour?"

"Dressed?"

"Most decidedly."

"I'm *longing* to see you," said Dawn Godley, laughed again and rang off.

She wore a gold-coloured gown, and looked magnificent.

It was a perfect meal, and the woman an ideal companion. They might have been old friends; certainly there was nothing to suggest that there was any animosity between them. It wasn't until they were drinking brandy—the Vineyard had a cellar worthy of its name—that either of them alluded to the previous night; and it was Rollison who was forced to raise the issue. He looked into her gold-flecked eyes, saw the smile in them and knew that she had enjoyed herself and that she also enjoyed keeping him on tenterhooks. He lit another cigarette, and said mildly:

"Still working for a certain bad man?"

"Oh, yes."

"So I'm to play by myself."

"You could be thinking of the wrong bad man," she said. "I think I'll try to help you, but don't know that I can do much. I'm terrified of the possibility that Glebber will find out, but—he's quite prepared to believe that it will take several days for me to worm myself into your confidence, and he's prepared to wait. He's very busy—I don't know exactly what he's doing."

Rollison said: "Well, well!"

"Now you're wondering whether I'm serious."

"Just let me wonder, and tell me one thing to show how serious you are."

"What's that?"

"Where can I find Glebber?"

She didn't answer at once, and the smile gradually faded. The most astonishing thing of all was the fear which Glebber managed to inspire in practically everyone who knew him well. In spite of the music and the light-hearted chatter going on about them, the subdued lights and the fleet-footed waiters, there was tension in the room. No one took any notice of them, although at first they had been the centre of attraction.

The woman said: "You really love danger, don't you?"

"I hate the thought and sight of it. Sometimes it can't be avoided."

"This can be avoided."

"I don't think so."

"You really intend to beard Glebber in his den?"

"'Intend' is exactly right," said Rollison. "It's a help that you know it. I hope you'll give me his address, because I'll probably run into a lot of bother trying to find it from someone else."

"If I give it to you——"

"I shall tell Glebber a convincing story of how I wormed it out of the police or someone equally likely."

"All right," she said abruptly. "Glebber is staying at The Willows, Wynberg."

By day, Rollison knew, Wynberg was one of the loveliest parts of the peninsula. Tonight there was no moon. The stars were out, and the lights from houses and streets speckled the darkness with a brightness which had a fascination all its own. At the wheel of another hired car he drove along the fine main road, and managed not to take the wrong turning. He pulled up at what seemed like a market place, where there was a cluster of large buildings, and asked a European who was coming out of one where The Willows was.

He was given careful directions; it might have been

imagination, but he fancied that the man looked at him curiously as he went off. He found the house five minutes away, and had to take a sharp right bend to get into the gates; the gates were closed. He drew into the road fifty yards beyond, where there was plenty of parking space, switched off the engine and took the ignition key out; but he didn't lock the doors. He walked back beneath the trees which made the darkness seem opaque; then it was broken by the friendly yellow of light from a house—The Willows.

The gate was not locked.

He opened it, pushed it back and wedged it open with a stone, then walked up a tarred drive towards the house. The light spread on a circular carriageway, on rose trees obviously in full bloom and on other trees and flowering shrubs; the sweet scent of tobacco plant was wafted towards him in a strong breeze.

He was alert for the sound of a dog or any other warning, but heard none as he walked right round the house.

There were lights at three windows, one of them at the back of the house, which was two-storeyed and painted white; its outline showing eerily in the night. He found that the other two lights came from different windows in a corner room.

If Glebber were at home, Glebber was probably in there.

Rollison heard music, from a radio or gramophone.

He smiled faintly in the darkness as he examined the windows of a room where there was no light. The window was covered with a fine mesh wire, but that was set in a frame, and easy to open. It creaked when he pulled it back. He examined the window itself, and found that it wasn't latched; Glebber wasn't expecting midnight visitors.

In fact it was nearly one o'clock.

The window was of the sashcord type, and Rollison pushed it up from the bottom, and climbed cautiously into the room. He closed the window behind him; open, it could alarm anyone who might pass outside. He

switched on a pencil torch, which shone on big easy chairs, small tables and the door. There was a big square of carpet in the middle of the room, but the surrounds were of wood, and, he now knew from experience, likely to be highly polished. He stepped gingerly, found the door and opened it; light shone on to his face from a wide passage which led to the hall.

The room he wanted would be on the other side of the hall.

The sound of music was louder now; a Brahms concerto; and obviously it came from a radiogram, there wasn't likely to be a broadcasting station open so late; the trifling thoughts passed through his mind. He tried several doors, and found one was a wardrobe cupboard, without windows. The key was in the door. He left that ajar and went towards the occupied room. He stood listening, heard nothing but the music, then turned the handle very cautiously.

Brighter light shone on to his face.

He peered inside and saw two heads—both men's. He recognized Glebber's; Glebber was sitting with his back to the door, the other man was sideways to the door, but looking towards a far corner; he was more likely than Glebber to notice movement. Rollison stepped farther inside, and pushed the door to; he felt a breeze; one of the men might also feel it, and wonder what caused it.

Neither appeared to notice the draught.

The radiogram changed its record automatically and the concerto continued, a delight to the ear. Rollison could now see part of Glebber's face; the man seemed entranced.

Rollison said: "Music-lover, Glebber?"

Glebber started up, at least three inches from his chair, and dropped down again. The other man didn't drop down, but half crouched in front of the chair. He was elderly and plump with a fat paunch; he probably didn't matter a great deal. He looked terrified.

After the first shock Glebber looked—just Glebber.

The parchment-dry skin, the shadowed, hooded eyes, the sunken cheeks—all were exactly the same.

"Don't be so surprised," said Rollison, "I said we'd be meeting, didn't I? No lock too complicated for the righteous to pick, you know. Having a nice little relaxation after all the murders?"

The elderly man made a gurgling noise in his throat.

"Perhaps you didn't tell your friend about them," said Rollison. "Too bad. But he'll learn when he reads all about the trial, Glebber. Interesting things, murder trials. Everyone reads them, and if you've a nodding acquaintance with the accused it gives added spice. Don't you think so?"

He went towards the table which stood between them, and helped himself to a cigarette. There was also whisky, soda and a jug of water.

"I'd always been told that South Africans were hospitable, and so far I've proved it. Are you going to be the exception to the rule?"

Glebber drew a deep breath.

"Pour Mr. Rollison a drink, Henry," he said.

"Soda, please," murmured Rollison. "Thanks. By the way, Gleb—you don't mind if I call you Gleb, do you, it sounds so much more friendly?—why did you kill O'Malley?"

The old man, who had picked up the whisky bottle, dropped it; it wasn't two inches above the table, and he grabbed it to stop it from falling to the floor.

Glebber said: "I didn't. And I warned you not to trust Anson."

"And so gave me the best of possible reasons for thinking that he's trustworthy."

"You'll fool yourself," Glebber said. "How did you find out where I was staying?"

"The police know everything."

The shadowy eyes, with all their evidence of dope addiction, narrowed almost imperceptibly.

"It is not easy to get on such good terms with the police."

"You forgot all the references I've brought with me, from Scotland Yard, Washington and the *Sûreté Générale*," said Rollison brightly. "They opened all respectable doors."

The old man had poured the drink; a little had spilt over the edge of the table on to the carpet. He brought the glass to Rollison, at a nod from Glebber; obviously he was completely under Glebber's thumb.

"Thanks," said Rollison. "Here's to a painless hanging." He sipped.

"Your abominable sense of humour will be your downfall," Glebber said. "Why have you come?"

"To find out why you killed O'Malley—and to suggest that you don't send men to throw stones at me when they've rolled an oak tree in front of my car and just failed to send me over the edge of a precipice. After all," went on Rollison earnestly, "that's a pretty good reason, isn't it? Self-preservation is one of the first rules of life."

"I did not do that."

"Nor kill O'Malley?"

"O'Malley was a very good servant of mine."

"Ah, yes. The one advantage in his death. Did you know that the police have been informed?"

"I have discussed the matter with them."

"Nice of you. Well, we'll find out the truth. Where's Mrs. Stein?"

"I have no idea. I have nothing to say to you. I have warned you in every way I can not to meddle in my affairs. I shall not warn you again." Glebber's voice sounded very tired, as if he were weary of the whole business. "Now, I am going to bed. If you have anything useful to say, say it and go."

Rollison chuckled.

"Oh, no. I'm not ready for bed yet. Nor are you, Gleb." He slid his hand to his pocket with a casual movement—and made the grey-haired Henry gasp when he drew out the gun. "Get up, old chap. Find a nice little box-room—a room with no windows. You and dear Henry are going to stay in one, until I've had a look round."

"No!" gasped Henry. "No!"

Glebber rose slowly from his chair, and the malignance in his eyes seemed to glow as he stared at Rollison.

Rollison just waved the gun.

Chapter XI

SEARCH

GLEBBER didn't speak as he moved towards the door; Henry muttered a kind of gibberish. Rollison opened the door for them, standing near enough to make sure that they didn't slam it in his face, yet far enough away to prevent either of them from snatching at the gun. The only danger was from Glebber. Glebber had the look of a man who could spit poison at him.

"Over there." Rollison motioned towards the door he'd left ajar.

Glebber began: "Rollison, if you——"

"Over there."

"He—he'll shoot," gasped Henry. "Don't anger him, don't anger him!"

"The wisdom of the aged," said Rollison sardonically.

Glebber was nearer him, so Rollison moved swiftly, took the man's left wrist, twisted him round and frisked him; he wasn't armed. Rollison pushed and Glebber almost fell inside. Henry had no weapon either. He could not scuttle after Glebber fast enough. Rollison closed the door and turned the key. He began to hum to himself. He stood with his back to the door, looking round, and saw no sign of anyone else. He had bested Glebber twice in two days, that wasn't bad going; but he had also made sure that Glebber would take off all brakes in future.

Rollison looked through the downstairs rooms; no one was about. He returned to the hall and went upstairs, quite free from any feeling of being watched. He kept

humming gently under his breath. Things were going almost too well.

He found a large landing with two passages and several doors leading off it; there were no lights. The servants would live in their own *kia*, a separate building; there was little to fear from them.

He opened one door after another. When he found one locked, he made a mental note of it and glanced into the other unlocked rooms. He found another locked door at the end of a passage; the first was more likely the door of Glebber's room. He moved through the wide passages, his footsteps muffled by a thick carpet, and felt completely at ease.

In the first room he found some of Glebber's clothes and a dressing-case with Glebber's name inside. He began to search with a painstaking care which he had learned over the years, and he regretted only one thing; that his invaluable Jolly was not with him. Jolly was pining in London.

He *must* write to Jolly; or cable him.

He found nothing after half an hour's search. Was there really any reason to hope that Glebber had part of that map?

At last he returned to the dressing-case, and examined it closely. It was of pigskin and beautifully made. He tested the lid and the various compartments and found no indication of a secret hiding-place. He stood it on a table and looked at it thoughtfully. There was no certainty that Glebber kept valuables in it, but Glebber wasn't likely to carry anything of value in his pockets, but would want it in his own keeping.

Rollison went over the case again. When he'd finished, he lit a cigarette, feeling bested. Then he stepped forward eagerly and picked up the case; the handle was very thick and seemed solid; was it too thick? He took out a penknife, which had special blades, and worked on one end of the handle, which had a patent steel fitting. The steel loosened. He prised it up. There was a

sharp click, and a small hole appeared at one end of the handle.

After that it was easy. There was a space inside the handle, with plenty of room for rolls of paper, for drugs or for anything small. He took the handle right off, and shook it over the table. Something appeared at the hole; cotton wool.

He whistled softly as he pulled at the wool. He wasn't surprised when he found three diamonds, each as large as a peanut, each beautifully cut.

"Not bad at all," he said softly.

He put the diamonds aside, and probed inside the handle; there was little chance that he would find anything else, but it was worth trying. It wasn't easy to get out; there was a way of opening the handle right up, but he hadn't yet found it. He pressed every part of it, but nothing happened. He set to work patiently with the all-purpose blade of his knife, trying to get the paper out without tearing it.

He got one end free, and pulled gently. It caught at one side, and he maneuvered so that it came out more freely. It was a cylinder of paper, half the diameter of a cigarette, and sealed at each end with gummed tape. He held it in his hand, and decided to try to open it without breaking the seal. He carried it downstairs, closing the door afterwards and paused for a few seconds outside the door of the wardrobe-cupboard; the mutter of voices was probably mostly Henry's.

Who was Henry?

Never mind Henry! Rollison found the kitchen and opened the door cautiously, without seriously expecting to find anyone in; all the domestic rooms were empty. He put a little water in a kettle on a gas-ring, and waited for it to boil. As the steam spurted from the spout, he held the end of the roll of paper over it; soon he was able to pull the gummed tape away, without tearing the paper itself. He repeated this at the other end, laid the gummed tape away carefully, then unrolled the paper.

It was obviously a photo-litho copy of a map; a simply

drawn map—and it was equally obvious that this was only part of it. There were several place names, oddly spelt and unfamiliar.

Glebber had a copy of one-half of the map—whose half didn't greatly matter, but probably it was Anson's. Glebber was no longer so interested in Anson but was very interested in the Steins; it was more likely to be the Steins' portion which Glebber wanted so badly; and he had sent messengers six thousand miles to get it, and to kill Stein and so make sure that Stein couldn't talk.

Rollison took everything upstairs, found some airmail paper in a small writing-case, and made another cylinder. He sealed the ends and put it in the handle.

He picked up the diamonds, hesitated and then wrapped them up in the cotton wool. Getting the handle filled again was difficult but he managed, and fitted it back to the case. Glebber probably wouldn't suspect that it had been discovered.

Then Rollison went out and closed the door; he didn't trouble to lock it, for Glebber would be sure that he had come here. He turned towards the stairs and hesitated; he had remembered the other locked door. If a job were worth doing, it was worth doing well; but he'd had a run of good luck, and didn't want to try it too far.

He went to the other room; the door was still locked. It was simple to open the lock with the special tool on his knife; he could have done it blindfolded. He made little noise, and opened the door cautiously. Darkness greeted him; that wasn't surprising. He stepped inside, listening—and heard the sound of troubled breathing.

He heard something else; and he'd heard a similar sound before, since reaching the Union; a sound which might have been a moan. It interrupted the uneven breathing, was repeated several times, then died away.

Rollison switched on the light.

A man lay tied to a bed, bound hand and foot; he didn't look hurt. His head was turning slowly from side to side, as if he were in pain—or else suffering from a nightmare. He was fully dressed, except for his collar and

tie and shoes, which were on the floor at the foot of the bed.

It was young de Beer—whom Rollison had last seen, with Kathleen Miller, going after Anson.

Rollison closed the door behind him, then went to de Beer's side. He examined him for head injuries and found none. Cautiously he untied the cords, then felt his arms and legs; nothing seemed to be broken. He lifted his eyelids; the pupils were pin-point, so the reporter had probably been drugged with one of the narcotics.

Rollison left him, and went to the door; he heard no sound. He went back, lifted de Beer and hoisted him over his shoulder, fireman-fashion, then managed to turn and close the door. He didn't lock it. He went carefully downstairs. De Beer was heavy—much heavier than he had looked; Rollison was breathing hard by the time he reached the bottom of the stairs. He put the reporter down, sitting him on a chair in the hall, then opened the front door. For the first time he regretted leaving the car so far away. If he left the reporter here alone, there was a risk that someone else would come into the house. If that happened, there would be little chance of keeping de Beer safe. But it was fully fifty yards from the front door to the drive, and another fifty to the car.

De Beer was too far gone to come round and walk.

Rollison decided to go for the car, left the hall light on, ran down the drive and to the car, and was back in less than five minutes. Nothing had altered. He went to the wardrobe-cupboard and turned the key gently. There was silence.

He carried de Beer to the car, put him in the back and drove off.

He wasn't thinking much about the youngster or Glebber as he drove; but a great deal about the danger Kathleen Miller might be in.

The night porter at the hotel was understanding and

helpful. He took them up in the lift, and helped Rollison to carry de Beer along to Rollison's room. He even looked surprised at a ten-shilling tip, and his good night was hearty. Rollison closed the door on him, leaned against it in familiar pose and studied the helpless young man on the bed. He seemed to see, instead, the fresh beauty of Kathleen Miller.

He looked at de Beer's eyes again; the pupils were still pinpoints, he wasn't likely to come round for several hours.

It was half-past three.

Rollison slept in a chair until half-past seven, then heard an unfamiliar sound, which seemed to come from a long way off—a whining sound. He opened one eye. It was a bright sunlit morning, and he saw a patch of clear blue sky. So far, so good; but the sound came again. He opened the other eye, and saw the bed and de Beer, still stretched out, but trying to sit up, and grunting with the effort.

"'Morning," Rollison said. "Shall I send for some tea?"

De Beer dropped back on his pillows, licked his lips and muttered hoarsely:

"Where's Kathleen? Did you find her? Where's Kathleen?"

Rollison got up very slowly, and the look in his eyes seemed to frighten de Beer into silence.

"So they got you both," Rollison said.

"Yes—we hadn't a chance. We were chasing after Anson. The car was held up, and—the men had guns. We hadn't a chance. Don't you know where she is?"

"No," said Rollison. "But I'm going to find out."

Three hours later Rollison was in the same vicious mood. Glebber had left Henry's house at Wynberg. "Henry" proved to be a Henry Gallop, one of the Rand millionaires who was believed to be in Glebber's pocket —no one knew why. There was little doubt that Henry handled the diamonds which Glebber's organization smuggled from the fields.

Dawn Godley said that she heard nothing since Rollison had left her the previous night.

The editor of *Die Komeet*, calm in spite of the emergency, had immediately contacted the police. Rollison had another session with them and told a carefully prepared story; he had been to see Glebber, had left him and found de Beer by the roadside. There was nothing yet to disprove that story.

As far as he knew there was no news of Anson.

He didn't think that anyone would be able to tell him where he could find Glebber, if Glebber wanted to hide.

De Beer had been sent home, and Rollison faced the fact that in the Cape his resources were few. He wanted to go to Oudtshoorn, where he was most likely to find Anson. He had a copy of a map which might be worthless, sundry bruises and a great deal of anxiety; no more. He was even tempted to tell the whole story to the police.

He decided to go to Oudtshoorn.

He went up to his room to pack a week-end case, opened the door without thinking and saw the man hiding behind the door a fraction of a second too late. He shouted, then a heavy weight descended on his head, and he lurched forwards into unconsciousness.

He came round in darkness. His head ached, but that was not his chief worry. He had no idea where he was, and for a while didn't recollect what had happened. Memory seeped back. He had one cheerful thought—at least he wasn't dead. He remembered being attacked as he had entered his room, the first time that he had gone in without taking precautions.

Could he have been kidnapped from a hotel in the heart of Cape Town?

He turned over slowly; his head seemed to sway up and down. In spite of it he managed to sit up—so he wasn't tied to the bed. He groped at one side, touched what he thought was a telephone, tried to find a lamp—and touched it too heavily. It crashed to the floor. He fell

back on his pillows, cursing his own clumsiness, but there was no need to curse, for there was a sound at the door. It opened to admit some light and a big man.

The man said: "What's up?"

"Knocked the lamp over," said Rollison.

The man grunted, and switched on the main light; it struck against Rollison's eyes, and he gasped with pain. The man immediately put it out again.

"Sorry." He came across, righted the bedside lamp, left it on the floor and switched it on. It was the plain-clothes policeman who had questioned him before—named du Toit. The lamp hadn't broken and the light was subdued.

"Thanks," said Rollison. "Mind telling me where I am?"

It was a silly question; he knew that as soon as it was out of his mouth, because he recognized the room; he was at the Cape Hotel. He gave a giggling kind of laugh as du Toit came nearer.

"Your hotel."

"Thanks. Who are you?"

"Police. Remember?"

"Oh, yes. Stable door," said Rollison inanely. "Bolted belatedly, I mean."

"It's your own fault," said the policeman heavily.

"Oh, indubitably. As Jolly would say."

"Who?"

"Jolly."

"Who's Jolly?"

"My man."

"Where is he?"

"In London—I think. I must write to him. Or send him another cable. Or both. Both, perhaps."

"Perhaps *you'd* better see a doctor."

"Oh, no," said Rollison hastily. "Nothing the matter with me, I'm just beginning to wish that I'd brought Jolly with me. He would have the answer to everything, even in South Africa."

"So there are two of you," said du Toit drily.

Rollison grinned faintly.

"I give you that point. Sorry, but I've a head like a

kicking horse, and a lot of minor troubles. Could there be—tea, for instance? And aspirins?"

"I'll fix it." Du Toit lifted the telephone and ordered tea from the night porter, then took a small bottle from his pocket and shook some aspirins out on to the palm of his hand. "Take as many as you like. The doctor said aspirins, if you woke up with a headache."

Rollison selected three, paused and took a fourth.

"How long have I been here?"

"It's about half-past twelve—midnight."

"Oh," said Rollison. That sobered him, and he lay still for a few minutes, then looked straight into the face of his guard. "News of Kath Miller?"

"No."

"Anyone?"

"No one's found Anson, if that's what you mean."

"That's what I mean," said Rollison. "Know what happened here?"

"The room was searched by experts." Du Toit frowned. "What do they want from you?"

"I wish I knew!"

Du Toit looked sceptical, but didn't argue.

Rollison felt an irritation at the back of his head and put his hand up to rub it—but didn't touch hair. He sat with his hand raised and touching the back of his head, and his expression was so ludicrous that du Toit laughed.

"You're bandaged."

"Good Lord," said Rollison weakly. "That's as bad a shaking as I'm likely to have for a long time. Serious injury?"

"No, or you wouldn't be here. You've a thick skull."

"Like George," murmured Rollison. "Oh, well."

The tea arrived, and did him good, although for a few minutes it made his head throb badly. The policeman's face seemed to go round and round, but that steadied. Soon, Rollison began to feel drowsy; there was a great deal to do, he ought to be up and doing, but he knew

that he wouldn't be able to stir himself to any effort until morning; he was doubtful about the morning.

He was doubtful with good reason.

It was three days before he was up and about again, and even then the back of his head was extremely tender. He had been able to do little, the inquiry agency had no news of Mrs. Stein, nothing went right.

He was desperately worried, for there was no news of Kath Miller.

There was no need for him to tell the police what he knew about Anson. De Beer and Kathleen had overheard Anson tell the friend from whom he had borrowed the car that he was going to Oudtshoorn; so the police knew. They hadn't found Anson, and Glebber was still missing. They had nothing against Glebber, even if they could find him.

On the afternoon of the third day, when Rollison was sitting up in a chair and looking out of the window and finding the view of Table Mountain almost as fresh as it had been on the first day of his arrival, he had a visitor. She was announced, but that hardly took the edge off his surprise. She was perfectly dressed in a green linen suit, just right for the day, which would have been baking hot but for the breeze which blew in from the south-east. She had on exactly the right make-up and exactly the right accessories, and no man could have seen her without a momentary lifting of his heart.

"Hallo, Dawn," he said quietly.

She came across and took his hand.

"How are you?"

"Nursing a grievance."

"Don't," she begged, and squeezed his hand so tightly that it hurt. "Don't go on. He nearly got you, and he will get you if you carry on with it."

"He hasn't had it all his own way yet," Rollison murmured. "Sit down and let me send for some tea."

She sat down, pulling up a chair close to the open window; but she didn't take any notice of the view, just

studied Rollison's face. Again he had the feeling that he had known her for a long time; again he did not think that she was bad. He got up slowly, and pressed the bell for the floor-waiter. She watched him, and every now and again her gaze went to his bandages.

"If it hadn't been for a man who was passing when you were attacked, you would be dead," she said.

"I knew it was something like that," confessed Rollison.

"And you still want to go on?"

Rollison said: "You didn't know Kathleen Miller well, did you? If it weren't for me, she wouldn't have been involved in this foul business. Glebber kidnapped her. I'm in this game until I've found her—and for a long time afterwards, if he's hurt her. Understand, my sweet?"

She closed her eyes.

"Yes, I understand."

She was going to say something else, but the waiter came in; and then she wasted time in idle talk until the boy returned with tea and pastries. He put them on a small table and Dawn poured out, as if she were used to presiding over the tea-table. She handed Rollison his cup and he noticed the perfection of her hands.

"Thanks."

"Will nothing stop you?"

"Nothing."

"Then I suppose I ought to give you what help I can," said Dawn. "I shall suffer for it, but if it's a choice between you and Glebber, I'd rather you won. Glebber's gone——"

She broke off.

"Don't spoil it now," said Rollison gently.

She was pale, and she was frightened. He believed that it was because she had seen a vision of what would happen to her if Glebber knew that she had betrayed him; and it was an ugly vision. For a few seconds he was afraid that it was so ugly that it would stop her from going on. Then she said abruptly:

"He's at Oudtshoorn. I had a telephone call from him.

He said he won't be back for a few days. We were going away for the week-end, so that's off. What—what are you going to do?"

"Get myself a guide and make a journey," said Rollison very softly.

Chapter XII

MOUNTAIN PASS

Dawn watched him as he moved about the room, touching this and touching that, unable to keep still. Her lips curved slightly, and her beauty seemed to take on a new freshness.

"A lion, prowling," she said.

"A human being, anxious."

"You think too much about other people."

"It could be a good fault."

"Oh, yes," admitted Dawn. "The trouble is, you've made me start thinking about others, too. I thought I was proof against it." She moved towards him and they stood very close together. As if by some inner stirring, their hands touched; and gripped.

"Stay in the Cape with me," she whispered. "Don't go after Glebber." She pulled him closer, and she had surprising strength. Her lips were close to his now, her eyes half closed, the lashes sweeping her cheeks. "Don't go, Richard. Stay here with me. Have—fun."

He kissed her gently.

"Thanks, Dawn. Fun later."

"You're—quite sure."

"Quite sure."

"Whatever happens," she said, withdrawing slowly, "you can't blame me. Remember that—you can't blame me."

He smiled and didn't answer as she went out, closing the door gently.

Her smile, the touch of her lips and her words lingered; and the words remained most vivid. He couldn't blame her, she was anxious that he should understand that. Why? What was the truth about her? When she was with him, he could believe in her innate goodness, but the spell faded when she left. She was a servant of Glebber; looked at coldly and dispassionately, that was simple truth; she was a servant of Glebber.

She had told him about The Willows; that might have been to break down the distrust she knew he would have of her. She had told him about Oudtshoorn. Why? Was it a trap? Had she been certain that whatever she said, he would make the journey? Was Glebber there, waiting for him?

Rollison turned sharply from the window. He was getting soft. He had to make preparations for a journey. He needed a guide and a powerful car. Doctors could say what they liked, he was well enough to act now.

He left the hotel a little before six o'clock, head still bandaged, and took a taxi to Dr. White's house.

White took him to the tenement where George lived, for the police hadn't held George on any pretext. They'd questioned him exhaustively, and learned only the truth —he had run messages for O'Malley, sometimes to Mount Street. He did not know who had attacked him or why. That was his story, and no more could be got out of him.

Rollison questioned George for ten minutes. He gave up when he realized that George had been scared into silence.

"Yes, master," said George huskily. "I come with you. I know the road very well. I can drive, I will do everything the master wants."

His black face was shiny in the light of an electric lamp which was set high in the ceiling of a big, untidy room. There were five beds in it, a kitchen table, an oil stove; he was lodging here. There was a smell of stale cooking and of wine. The window was covered with a

tattered curtain, and the beds were covered with gay patchwork quilts.

"Yes, master," George went on earnestly. "Doc White, he tell me you think perhaps I could work for you. I am willing. I will do everything. Doc, he tells me that you find me and save my life."

"Not quite that," said Rollison.

"Doc, he says so. Doc not a liar."

Rollison smiled.

"All right, George. When can you start?"

"Now, master."

"Not a bad idea," said Rollison. "They'll have accommodation for you at the hotel. How long will it take you to pack?"

"No time, master." George smiled faintly, and turned —and picked up a battered suitcase which was tied round with rope. "I am ready." He had a big round face with wonderful teeth, and the whites of his eyes glistened. Although he had sticking plaster on his head, he looked fit, and he moved with a lithe grace which was almost animal. He opened the door for Rollison, and waited for him to walk down the stone steps, pitted with holes; oddments of garbage lay close to the walls. They went out into the darkness of a narrow street called, heaven alone knew why, the Winter Gardens. There was a dim light and shadowy figures, and the wind howled eerily. The taxi-driver was sitting at his wheel, and leaned forward to open the door. At the far end of the street, gathered near a lighted window, a crowd of ten or twelve men were singing; the harmony had a strange beauty against the festering background.

The driver looked startled at the sight of George, who climbed in next to him, case on his knees. Rollison sat behind.

They drove without incident through the mean, narrow streets, and sometimes the howl of the wind was louder than the engine of the car; thousands of eyes seemed to watch.

George was outside the hotel at half-past eight next morning, when Rollison came out. George had a salesman and a huge stream-lined Buick for trial. He wore a neat blue suit and a chauffeur's cap. It would be interesting to find out what his first recommendation was like. He stood smiling, as Rollison said:

"We haven't much time, George."

"No, master. Will the master drive?"

"You."

The salesman was anxious, but Rollison gave him little time to eulogize.

George looked delighted and took the wheel. He started off smoothly down the long drive, and they saw the gates at the end of the trees beyond, bright in the morning sun. Rollison saw something else—and caught his breath.

George looked at him anxiously.

A remarkable figure was walking along the drive towards them; remarkable, because he was dressed in dead black, and wore, of all things to wear in Cape Town, a black bowler hat. He helped himself along with a tightly furled umbrella which served as a walking stick, and he walked briskly. He stepped tc one side as the car drew nearer. His face was clear in the sunshine—a lined face, with brown, rather doleful eyes. He was a man of middle-age, well-preserved and, even at that distance, he looked competent.

"Oh, no," breathed Rollison.

"Master is ill?" asked George anxiously.

"No. Stop."

George pulled up, and they stopped a few yards in front of the man in black, who gave them attention for the first time. He started, backed, tripped against the curb and nearly fell; only his umbrella saved him.

"Well, well," breathed Rollison, and opened the door and got out. "It can't be. Jolly, you're a ghost."

"Good morning, sir," said the man in black. "I am quite solid, I assure you."

Rollison gulped. "But—why this?"

"I saw in the newspapers that you had been hurt, sir, and was afraid that it might be a serious injury. I consulted your Aunt Gloria, sir, and we agreed that it would be wise if I were to fly out. I arrived in the early hours of the morning, and did not want to disturb you, so I stayed at a small hotel not far away. Then I decided to walk here—there is no way of getting to know a new town so well as walking through it." Jolly paused, eyed Rollison critically and went on quietly: "I am delighted that you are no worse, sir, but ought you to be out? Is the head injury serious?"

"No," said Rollison. "At least it wasn't until I had this shock. I shall probably get concussion after this. Jolly, this is George. Our boy."

Jolly turned his soulful brown eyes towards the native boy, and inclined his head.

"Good morning."

"Good morning, boss," said George, showing a nice distinction.

"Had breakfast?" Rollison asked.

"Oh, yes, sir."

"Then hop in. We're going to test a car before we buy it."

"I see, sir," said Jolly. He stood aside as Rollison got in at the back, and then got in after him. George drove off. swung out of the drive and in the traffic proved that he could handle a car expertly. "This car?" asked Jolly.

"If you approve."

"We must give it a good test, if you are contemplating a journey of any distance," said Jolly, "and presumably you are, or you would not consider buying a car."

"I am. After the man who slugged me."

"I see, sir," said Jolly.

They sat in silence as George drove through the city, then went out towards Signal Hill. This was the first time that Jolly had seen the view, and he showed more than usual interest, although he made no comment.

Rollison took the wheel on the way back, stopped at the foot of a hill and said:

"Hotel, George. We'll have this."

"Yes, master."

They drew up outside the hotel, and George drove away, while Jolly and Rollison went upstairs with the salesman, who left a happy man.

Rollison's case was packed, but most of his clothes were in the wardrobe; he was keeping on the room until he returned. Jolly went to look at Table Mountain, and nodded gravely.

"Most impressive views, sir. I wish I were as impressed by some of the people you have been meeting. Have you time to tell me what has been happening?"

"I'll report in the car, as we go," said Rollison.

"Very good, sir. Are we ready?"

"We have to pick up your luggage."

"It is ready and waiting, and won't take five minutes," Jolly said. "Are you taking the native boy?"

"He knows the roads and the ropes, and he's a mechanic."

"Is he trustworthy?"

"He was nearly killed by these people."

"Then he should have no love for them," Jolly said primly.

The way out was along the road on which Rollison felt almost at home. He talked in undertones, sitting in the back with Jolly, while George's impassive back was erect behind the wheel; he drove well. Jolly made an occasional comment, to get a point clear; apart from that he did not interrupt. The story wasn't finished until they were halfway along the National road to Paarl. Rollison tossed the butt of a cigarette out of the window as he stopped talking, and remembered Kath Miller telling him that wasn't the thing to do. A surprising number of things reminded him of Kath.

Jolly sat musing.

"Well?" asked Rollison, at last. "Approve?"

"I can understand your feelings, sir, but am by no means sure that you have been wise," said Jolly frankly.

"I think you would have been well-advised to stop the case earlier. From the time you had reason to believe that Stein was a rogue, say. Now, of course, it is too late."

"Thanks," said Rollison drily.

"You have not ventured any comment on the people concerned, except Glebber," Jolly went on. "Yet I gather you are favourably impressed by this Mrs. Godley, although it is so obvious that she may be fooling you."

"Yes."

"Anson?" murmured Jolly.

"I don't understand him. He blows hot and blows cold very easily. There's more to this than meets the eye, but no one should be surprised about that. Probably it's simple, in essence. The diamond field, the chase for it and the missing half of the map, which Mrs. Stein may or may not have. Anson and Glebber each had one half, probably the same half—and so they're both after Mrs. Stein. I've a copy of Glebber's. Glebber thought I had the Stein half when I arrived, had me brought to Mount Street, then realized I hadn't got it. Agreed?"

"There's one thing you appear not to have considered," murmured Jolly.

"I'm not surprised, but what is it?"

"The curious persistence of the other young lady, and the fact that she was kidnapped." Jolly spoke quietly as he sat on his corner, watching the distant mountains and apparently without the slightest suspicion that he had caused a sensation.

"Kath?" exclaimed Rollison. "Oh, no!"

"I felt that you had taken her at her face value," murmured Jolly almost apologetically. "On the other hand, look at the facts. She was the first to meet you. She stuck to you very closely indeed. She tried hard to prevent you from going on with the affair—I did understand you correctly about that, didn't I?"

"You did, Jolly."

"After all, sir, a newspaperman or woman would be expected to encourage rather than discourage such an adventure. I can imagine that they would write the

story up very strongly. In fact, they have given you a great deal of space. I was able to glance through the local newspapers of the past few days. Why did the young woman try to discourage you? And why did she follow you to the farm on the second occasion? Further," continued Jolly, warming up, "why was she kidnapped? That seems to be an extremely important reason. After all, Glebber has proved that he is no fool. He would hardly kidnap a newspaperwoman, and set the whole of the journalistic world on his heels, for an insignificant reason. So—why did he kidnap her?"

Rollison lit another cigarette, and looked at George's back. He sounded humble.

"You couldn't be more right, Jolly. Mysterious behaviour of young woman reporter. I did think about it lightly, too lightly."

"Obviously you have been greatly preoccupied," said Jolly primly. "It is easy for me, looking at the matter dispassionately, to see things which it would be very easy indeed for you to miss. I should certainly make some inquiries about the young woman."

"I will," said Rollison heavily.

"Shall we turn back?"

"I'll make the inquiries later. We want to find out what Glebber is doing at Oudtshoorn."

"It would not surprise me at all to find that you have been sent on a wild-goose chase," said Jolly. "If Glebber wants you out of the way, what better method than to lay a false trail—through Mrs. Godley?"

Rollison drew a deep breath.

"You're not good for me, Jolly. You have me worried."

"Do you still intend to proceed?" asked Jolly.

After a long pause Rollison said: "Yes."

They found themselves on the great mountain pass just beyond Paarl, and in spite of his preoccupation, Rollison watched the ever-changing mountain scenery with an intentness matched by Jolly's. Panorama after panorama became bold, only to fade into another more

breath-taking than the last, and impress them with a sense of grandeur and of majesty which made their own affairs seem trivial. There was little other traffic, and the road was perfect. George, who could not have done much driving of late, seemed to know exactly how to take the bends, and gave them no concern.

They were travelling fast.

"How far is it, sir?" asked Jolly.

"Three hundred miles, more or less."

"With good fortune, then, we shall be in by nightfall." Jolly was almost smug. "I always understood that the South African roads were bad."

"Queer idea," said Rollison.

On the other side of Montagu, after three hours driving, they hit a dirt road for the first time. George slowed down to take the change, but the car jolted suddenly, Jolly was flung against Rollison. He straightened up with a murmured apology. Rollison kept a poker face. George increased the speed and they found the bumping less violent; ahead, the road stretched out in corrugations—worn by the fast moving cars until it looked as if thousands of big logs had been stretched out, like railway sleepers but placed closer together and covered with a powdery dust. The dust behind them billowed in a great cloud.

George leaned back suddenly.

"Car is coming, master. I should shut your window."

They hadn't seen the car, which hurtled towards them. Dust rose in a cloud behind it, and the wind blew it in their direction. Rollison grabbed the window handle, but was too late, the fine dust blew into the car, and set them coughing. Rollison recovered, and drew a deep breath.

"I hope we don't run into much traffic."

"Not much, sir," said George. "But I do not like the weather, master."

Ahead, black clouds were massing over mountain tops, although they were still driving through hot sunshine which baked the broken, rocky country. They passed a

flock of goats, some grazing at the roadside; one ambled across, making George slow down. There was no pasture-land here, only the rugged foothills and the mountains beyond; the road led continually upwards.

"Shall we make it before dark, George?" Rollison asked.

"No, master," said George simply.

"Think we ought to stop overnight?"

"If there is rain, master, yes. At Barrydale, perhaps, or Ladysmith. In rain, these roads are very bad. I made a visit, once. It was—very bad." George shrugged his shoulder in resignation, and repeated: "Very bad, master."

"I hope we can get into a hotel, sir," Jolly was anxious. "I really think there is rain ahead."

"We can always sleep in the car," Rollison said philosophically. "I'll drive for a bit."

He took the wheel at the foot of a slope which led upwards gradually at first, then steeply, through the mountains. As the clouds drew nearer and cast gloom over the land, the rugged beauty faded, and rocks and ravines held brooding menace. Great boulders overhung the road itself, turns were sharp and unexpected and there was no wall or protection of any kind on the offside. Rollison took the corners cautiously, with George beside him, and Jolly sat at the back. Both George and Jolly were obviously anxious. Rollison had calculated that they were twenty miles off Ladysmith when he took over; after five miles he doubted whether they would reach the town before the rain came. To the right and left and ahead of them there was early dusk; the tops of the mountains were covered in mist. Rain seemed to be coming down in sheets, but they were free of it.

He turned a corner.

A wall of rain smashed at them, hit the car with a report as loud as hail, and the windscreen was bleared in a few seconds. Rollison slowed down and switched on the wipers; rain smacked at them, bounced off the bonnet and poured off the roof, as if they had been running through it for miles. The road, thick with dust up to the corner, had become a quagmire. He felt the front wheels

skid, let the car run with the skid and straightened out. He sensed that Jolly was sitting up straight on the edge of his seat. George was looking out of the window. Here the drop was not steep, they had come through the worst—but the road had been better in the pass; now there were inches of mud. The surface looked smooth and hard but the wheels squelched through it. He had driven through mud, but never anything like this. After a few miles the strain began to tell.

"Got the map, Jolly?"

"Yes, sir."

"How far to Ladysmith?"

"Ten miles, according to this map, sir."

"Any idea what the road's like, George?"

George said: "Very bad, master, after rain."

"It wouldn't be so bad if it were after the rain," said Rollison.

The downpour was less heavy now; but heavy enough. The squelching of the wheels, the whine of the wipers and the beat of the engine seemed to merge together in a wail of sound, as if a warning against the folly of going on; but they had to go on. They were down to twenty miles an hour; it was too fast. Rollison drove on into the greyness and wondered when he would have to put on his lights.

He saw something move at the side of the road, on the rough scrub; a sheep or goat? He watched it, and frowned; it wasn't four-legged. Any man out in this, on foot, would need help. He slowed down. It was a man on his knees, about a hundred yards ahead, some way off the road. There was no question about it—the man was crawling on his knees, sometimes using his hands to help himself along, sometimes raising them, as if trying to wave and attract their attention. He was smothered in mud; as they drew nearer, Rollison tried to guess whether it was a black man or a white, and couldn't be sure.

Cautiously he brought the car to a stop; the man was still twenty yards away from them off the road. He was white. His face was yellowish red not only with mud,

but with something else—dirt mixed with blood. As the car stopped he raised both hands, and made a pathetic effort to get to his feet. He failed and slithered forward, then lay still. The rain beat unmercifully upon him.

George opened a door swiftly.

"You stay, master. You stay, boss." He was out of the car in a flash, but Rollison didn't take his advice. He stopped the engine and opened the door.

"Just one moment, sir," said Jolly.

"Eh?"

"This will give you some shelter." Jolly stepped out of the car, and unfurled his umbrella, then opened it and held it over Rollison's head. The rain hit against it and the wind blew, but Jolly, dressed in dead black, stood against the wild mountains amid this scene of darkening desolation, offering the same protection that he would outside a Piccadilly club.

Rollison gulped. Laughter welled up, but he choked it back, and stepped out.

"Careful where you go, Jolly."

Jolly did not think that worthy of comment, but tried to pick his way through the mud. It was futile; within a few seconds it was over their ankles and smeared their trousers, and splashed up to their knees. Ahead, George was helping the man to his feet, but it was difficult going; the man seemed to be dead weight. Rollison reached him, went one side and put an arm round him; George did the same on the other side. Jolly hovered behind them, still holding up the umbrella; it was the most useful thing he could do.

Rollison took a good look at the wounded man for the first time—and slipped. He steadied and went on, but his heart beat faster.

This was Anson; and Anson was badly hurt.

Chapter XIII

ANSON TALKS

They lifted Anson into the back of the car. He was unconscious, his head lolling forward on his chest. Jolly sat with him, armed with all the handkerchiefs they had in their pockets and some water from a Thermos flask. Rollison took the wheel again. The rain had eased a little but it was much colder than he had expected to find anywhere in South Africa; and being damp didn't help. He shivered once or twice, and caught George's eye on him anxiously. Jolly was busy trying to give first aid at the back, and did not appear to notice the couple in front.

They came upon a stretch of road with a harder surface; Rollison went up to forty miles an hour, then skidded in a patch of mud he hadn't noticed. The light was poor; it was five o'clock. He went on more cautiously.

He heard Jolly sigh.

"What's the news, Jolly?"

"I don't think it's very serious, sir. Bad enough, but no bones broken. I should say that he's suffering from exposure more than anything else."

"Need we stop?"

"I don't advise it, sir."

"Then we won't," Rollison could not stop thinking about Anson and the wild coincidence of finding him. Coincidence? He knew enough of life to believe in it, but this seemed too great. As the darkness increased and they could see no more than a few hundred yards ahead,

he had the feeling which was so familiar here; the feeling of being watched. It was as if prying eyes were on the sides of the mountains and on the slopes leading to the valleys. Each corner seemed to hold menace. He switched on his headlights and switched them off again; they were useless in this half-light. He wanted to ask Jolly how far it was to the town, but didn't. Every corner held that menace and yet hope—that they would come upon the outskirts; but there were dozens of corners and they all turned into the gloom. The road became bad again, he was forced to crawl along. Behind him Jolly sat with an unconscious man, and ahead—lay what?

He turned a corner, wondering.

Lights sparkled at him.

"Sure, sure," said the proprietor of the hotel, the first they saw, "we can fix you up. Say you've had an accident? That's too bad, it sure is. But we can fix you up. Have a doctor over in no time, you've only to say the word. Don't *worry*, everything will be fine."

"Thanks," said Rollison. "Now if you'll lead the way to a room——"

"If you'll just sign the register," said the proprietor, a big, cheerful-looking man. "Then——"

"Room first," said Rollison firmly.

The proprietor gave way. Rollison and Jolly got Anson out, and carried him between them, while George and a boy took the luggage out of the boot. The proprietor's wife came hurrying, and turned down a bed.

"Don't worry about the sheets, just lay him down."

"Nice of you," said Rollison. "Thanks." They laid Anson flat, and Jolly immediately began to take off his shoes. He wore a collar and tie, and by some freak of chance they were the neatest things about him. His coat was torn in half a dozen places, and the right leg of his trousers was ripped up to the knee. Rollison picked up a shoe gingerly, and examined it; it was sodden, and, not simply with walking up towards the road; Anson had been in the rain for some time. The proprietress hurried

out, and soon returned with a bowl of hot water and towels.

"If I were you, sir," said Jolly, "I would have a hot bath, and then come and see the invalid. I'm *quite* sure that he's not badly hurt."

Rollison looked at Anson intently, felt his head and came to the conclusion that Jolly was right. He looked at Anson's wrist—and saw something which Jolly had missed. There were red marks where the wrists had been tied. He thought that there were chafing marks round the socks also. He didn't speak, went out and was met by the proprietor.

"I don't want to worry you, sir, but they're very strict here about signing the register. If you would come and sign—*then* you can have a hot bath."

Rollison sighed, signed, had a whisky and soda and a hot bath. When he went to a room which he and Jolly were to share Jolly had laid out his other suit, and was fixing cuff-links in the sleeves of a clean shirt. Jolly had changed, and looked spruce and clean.

Rollison chuckled.

"Nothing throws you out of your stride, does it?"

"Routine is invaluable, sir."

"Yes. How's the patient?"

"I think he is sleeping much more normally, and it wouldn't surprise me if he comes round soon. The landlady was very helpful, and he is in bed with hot-water bottles and quite dry—we gave him a blanket bath." Jolly finished with the shirt and put it on the bed carefully. "May I ask a question, sir?"

"Dozens."

"Do you know the victim?"

"What quick eyes you have. It's Anson."

"I see," said Jolly thoughtfully. "Remarkable that we should have stumbled across him, wasn't it?"

"Very. Yet the alternative seems almost as unlikely."

"What alternative, sir?"

"That we were known to be on the road. That Anson,

who had been a prisoner, was released at a spot where we were likely to find him. If so, why?"

Jolly shook his head slowly.

"Things don't happen without a reason here any more than they do at home," Rollison mused. "We may get an inkling when Anson comes round. Think it's worth sending for a doctor?"

"I shouldn't advise it, sir. It would mean an official report to the police, and I don't think you particularly want that."

"No. The police will probably hear about it, anyhow. We'll get some food. Any idea what's happened to George?"

"There are special quarters for him," Jolly said, "and I understand that he is quite comfortable. I told him that I thought it unlikely that he would be required again tonight, but requested him to be on call."

Rollison hid a smile.

"He took the car to a garage and has had it filled up with petrol and everything checked," Jolly went on. "We shall be able to start as soon as we wish in the morning. If you go along to the dining-room——"

"We'll go along," said Rollison firmly. "No segregation between us!"

The dining-room was hardly a delight to the eye, but the food was plain and wholesome. Rollison kept yawning, and was annoyed with himself; he should not be tired. He had an uneasy feeling that the last stretch of driving had pulled at his nerves more than it should have. If he yawned much more, Jolly would soon be sending for the doctor to see a different patient.

It was a little after eight o'clock when they went in to see Anson. He was lying under the bedclothes, quite still; but his eyes were open and turned towards the door. As they entered, he started. His face was pale and his eyes had the bright look of fever; he would need a doctor. He flung back the bedclothes and tried to get up, but collapsed on his pillows as Rollison hurried forward to help him.

"Take it easy," Rollison said, "you've nothing to worry about now. Just take it easy."

Anson croaked: "Roll—Rollison!"

"That's right. Not a ghost."

Jolly was already at the other side of the bed, with a glass of water in his hand. Rollison helped Anson to raise his head, and Jolly put the glass to the man's lips. Anson drank greedily; Rollison nodded to Jolly, who took the glass away. Anson sighed, and sank back on his pillows, but his eyes, so glassy with pain, fever and lack of sleep, burned into Rollison's.

"You must—save her," he muttered.

"That's why we're here," Rollison said.

"Must—save her," Anson muttered again; it would have been easy to think that he was delirious. "Oudtshoorn. House called—Kopje. Kopje. They'll—kill her."

"Mrs. Stein?" asked Rollison softly.

Anson gulped and licked his lips.

"Stein? Stein? I'd like to kill——" He broke off, drew in a deep breath and shouted: "No, you fool! Kath—Kath Miller. Glebber's got her, he'll kill——"

He broke off again. Rollison gave him another sip of water. The burning eyes were fixed on his. There was no doubt that Anson meant what he said, and felt a desperate fear for the girl. Anson had named the house; it looked straightforward. But why had he been released when he had? He was in no frame of mind to talk, probably wouldn't be coherent even if he tried to tell the story.

"Why will he kill her?" Rollison demanded.

"She—she knows—too much."

"What about?"

Anson gasped: "Don't stand there asking questions, go and save her! Go and save her. I—I tried. Oh, God!" he groaned, and closed his eyes, but there was misery in his expression, and he had never looked so old; he might be a man of forty. "She's—wonderful. Wonderful. I didn't think a woman——" He stopped again and

opened his eyes, and they seemed to be filled with the light of madness. "Go and save her!"

Rollison said: "A house called Kopje, at Oudtshoorn."

"On the—George road. About a mile out. We were both—prisoners. Tried to get away. Glebber—caught us. He sent me away. I was thrown down the mountainside—struck against a bush. Sheer—chance—I'm alive. She's still at the house. Go and—save her. Save her!" he shrieked.

He meant every word, but it still didn't ring true—not wholly true. That coincidence was much too great—Anson had been deliberately released. The story was right as far as Anson knew, but—why had Anson been released so that Rollison should find him? Was that theory right? If so, it was almost certain that Glebber wanted him to go to this house on the road beyond Oudtshoorn. Glebber wouldn't want that for the sake of giving hospitality.

"Was Glebber there?" he asked.

"Yes, but don't stand there asking questions. Go and save Kath!"

"We'll go," said Rollison. "You just take it easy." He went out and Jolly came after him and closed the door. They stood looking at each other in a dimly lighted passage; and there was no doubt of the wariness in Jolly's eyes. They didn't speak for fully a minute. Then:

"Coming?" asked Rollison.

"Tonight, sir?"

"Yes."

"It is sixty-five miles. There are some very bad roads and mountain passes. The chances of getting through are very poor, sir. And—why was Anson released? Obviously because Glebber hoped he would get in touch with you and that you would go rushing to this place. I could not advise more strongly against it." Jolly was at his most formal.

"I know," said Rollison. "You go and tell George we're hitting the road. I'll fix something for Anson." He turned

on his heel, and Jolly watched him as he disappeared along the passage.

The proprietor said that he was very glad that Mr. Rollison had decided to send for a doctor. He would arrange it. He did not think that it was wise to go on the road again that night, no matter how urgent it was. People familiar with the roads would hesitate. There had been a lot of rain in the mountains, and one if not two cloudbursts. The road to the Cango Caves and the road they'd already travelled were now impassable. There was a ten-mile stretch of mud on the George road, and then one came to the Huis River Pass—a very bad pass, even in good weather. He didn't advise Mr. Rollison to go out, whatever it was couldn't be urgent enough to make him risk his neck.

"Life and death," said Rollison, and smiled amiably. "You've been very good. Be even more helpful, will you—pack us some sandwiches and a bottle or two of whisky, we may need both."

Rollison took the wheel. The roads in the little town were bad enough, and before they reached the first signpost they were slithering. Jolly sat beside him and George in the back; and Jolly wasn't happy. George said absolutely nothing. They reached the straight road leading to the town of George, and the mud was just a sticky sea, stretching out in front of them, showing a golden red in the headlights.

"Noticed anything?" asked Rollison abruptly.

"It's not raining."

"Our good fairy is looking after us," Rollison said.

There was no other traffic on the road, which was fairly straight; at least they did not have to look out for potholes. Rollison was able to keep moving at thirty miles an hour, and although the wheel kept slipping out of his hand, he had no major skid. After forty minutes the surface got better; they could hear it beneath the wheels. They came upon a sharp bend, and the headlights shone

out over a dark void; the land fell sheer from the edge of the road. Rollison hugged the near side.

From then on it was nightmare.

They seemed to be driving along the edge of a mountain, and hairpin bend followed hairpin bend, with no protection at all. At each bend the roads were heavily cambered and the car reared over; it was an age before it settled again; at moments they seemed to be travelling on two wheels.

The rain kept off; there were stars, small and very bright, an immeasurable distance off. The blackness beyond the range of the headlights seemed impenetrable, and full of lurking mystery. Rollison knew that if he made one slip he wouldn't get another chance. He felt oddly self-possessed, and even let himself think of Anson's story and the way Anson had talked of Kathleen Miller. He did not think beyond that; did not try to guess what lay behind Glebber allowing Anson to escape.

They drove on through the gaunt darkness, with death lying in wait for them on either side and on the road ahead.

For thirty-five minutes Rollison was continually pulling at the wheel and had no rest. Then they came to a straight stretch; there was mud, but not so treacherous as before.

"I think I should let George drive for a while, sir," suggested Jolly.

"Good idea," Rollison said.

Three and a half hours after they had left Ladysmith they reached Oudtshoorn, where the lights were mostly dimmed, and no one was about. Rollison sat in the back with Jolly, and yawned with abandon. He was convinced that nothing worse in the way of roads could lie ahead of them; after that drive any threat from Glebber seemed innocuous.

They drove through the tarred roads of the town and reached the George road. There George pulled into the side of the road and stopped.

"Now all we have to do is to find a house called Kopje,"

said Rollison. "And all we know is that it's probably on a hill. Any ideas, Jolly?"

"We could call at a house where there is a light, and inquire," said Jolly. "I did think that we might have done that before leaving the town, sir."

"Yes. Stop at the next house where there's a light, George."

"Yes, master."

A light shone, not far ahead of them; it looked to be on the road, but was almost certainly some distance off, probably a mile away. The surface was poor, but George handled the car well. The light seemed to draw nearer. It wasn't a house, but a single light, actually on the road, moving up and down, as if it were being carried in someone's hand. Why should anyone walk on a road like this in the early hours of the morning? Rollison didn't try to guess. Soon the headlights picked out the shape of a man, and dimmed the light of the torch he carried; he put it out and showed up, a dark lonely figure. On either side were low bushes, and he walked on the side of the road, where grass made it less muddy.

He waved his hands, to stop them.

"Must I stop, master?"

"Yes," said Rollison.

George slowed down alongside the man. Rollison opened his window, and put on the roof-light of the car. It shone on a white face—and it shone on a gun in the man's hand.

"Name of Rollison?" the man asked in a sneering voice.

Rollison heard Jolly catch his breath. The man with the gun opened the door, and stood back covering them both. George seemed to be staring straight ahead of him, as if completely disinterested, but he was shivering.

"Why, hallo," said Rollison brightly. "Fancy falling among friends."

"Your good luck," said the stranger. "Don't over-play it, chum." He didn't move, just stood grinning—but others moved. Three men had been walking along the side of the road hidden by the bush. Now they appeared,

one of them going to George and thrusting a gun in his face. Jolly didn't speak, but Rollison heard a rustle of movement and was quite sure that Jolly would not have come on his errand unprepared.

"I shouldn't, Jolly," he said.

"Shouldn't what?" demanded the man with the gun.

"Tell you what he thinks of you."

The man guffawed.

"That would worry me. Shift over, there's room for three. We're going for a little ride."

"All the way to a house called Kopje?"

"That's right." The man pushed Rollison, who shifted along the seat. Another made George move from the wheel, and took over himself. The other two stayed outside. The driver started off and drove slowly, at not much more than walking pace. Inside the car there was only the sound of the breathing of the five men—outside, the steady beat of the engine. There was eeriness everywhere.

Soon they turned off the road.

A light shone some distance ahead, and they went up a steep slope. The headlights showed the white walls of a single-storey house, which seemed to spread over a large area. The front door was open, and a light shone from a room on to a long, narrow stoep. The car pulled up outside the front door, and the man next to Rollison said:

"Out, chum."

"Thanks. Comfortable beds here?"

"You'll be comfortable all right!" The man laughed and helped Rollison out with a push. Rollison stumbled on the gravel surface, as George climbed down, also covered by a man with a gun. Jolly, pale-faced, followed. George was pushed towards the side of the house. Rollison watched him, tight-lipped. He had asked for this himself, and Jolly always knew the risk of working with him. It was different for George.

The man poked him in the ribs with the gun.

"Hurry."

"Sorry," murmured Rollison. He turned and punched

the man in the stomach, a terrific short-arm jab which sent the breath belching from his body. As the man gasped and staggered back, Rollison snatched at his gun. He saw Jolly kick at another of the captors. By then his own gun was out and he covered the second armed man. George turned suddenly, and leapt at the man who had attacked Rollison; he wrenched the gun from his hand; Rollison couldn't have done it better.

Rollison breathed: "Progress! Now perhaps——"

"Put that down, Rollison," said Glebber from the door. "If you give any more trouble, I shall shoot your man—and I shall kill Miss Miller. Just stand still."

Rollison stood with his back to the door, but he would have recognized that flat, monotonous voice anywhere; this was Glebber in the flesh. Jolly, without a gun, was standing halfway between him and the car. George, backing towards the bonnet of the car, crouched with a gun in his hand.

He said: "Come away, master. I can shoot."

Glebber said: "Tell him to drop that gun, Rollison."

"Master, come," pleaded George.

Rollison drew in his breath.

"Drop it, George," he said. "Glebber, don't illtreat him. Understand?"

Glebber didn't speak. Slowly, reluctantly, George lowered his gun. One of the others rushed forward, snatched it from him and then kicked him savagely. George backed away unsteadily.

"That's enough," Glebber said. "Take him round to the back."

Rollison saw two men line themselves by George, and take him away. Rollison still held his own gun, and slipped it into his pocket. Then he turned and went forward, seeing Glebber for the first time here; and Glebber hadn't changed. He stood aside for Rollison to enter a large hall, pleasantly furnished and well lighted.

"I felt sure that you would come," said Glebber, almost conversationally. "I had you watched along the road and knew exactly where you were. Anson had been taken to a

place outside Ladysmith, and when I heard you were approaching I arranged for him to be released—he thought he was to be killed. I knew he would name this house, and felt sure that I could rely on you not to tell the police, but to come yourself. You see how easy it is to deal with people like you, Rollison, once you have had a little practice."

"Oh, very," said Rollison. "Now we're here, what do you want?"

Glebber laughed. "My property. As I've always told you. You will also tell me exactly what Anson has told you. Unless you obey, both Miss Miller and Anson will be killed."

A girl cried out: "No, no!"

It was Kathleen Miller's voice, from a room nearby; there was no sound of movement, nothing but that despairing: "No, no!"

Chapter XIV

ULTIMATUM

Glebber stood smiling—just a curl of his lips; his eyes held no expression. The girl cried out twice, then fell silent. She didn't move. Rollison knew that her voice had come from a room on the right, and he moved towards it. Glebber watched him closely. Jolly was standing under guard by the open door, and in Jolly's eyes there was a look of appeal, for he knew what Rollison might do if he were angry enough.

Glebber snapped his fingers.

That made little sound, but one of the men sprang forward, reached Rollison before he entered the room, pulled him round by his shoulder and snatched the gun out of his pocket. It was the man whom Rollison had hit, and his features were still twisted in pain—and in hate. Rollison made no attempt to hold the gun, and Glebber snapped his fingers again; the man released Rollison.

"Take the other man away," ordered Glebber.

He meant Jolly. Rollison glanced round at him. Jolly inclined his head slightly, and made no protest when he was led along a wide passage.

Rollison turned towards the room on the right, and stepped inside.

The girl was sitting in an armchair of stinkwood; everything in here was made of stinkwood, all was expensive. The light was subdued, but that could not hide the torment in the girl's eyes.

She was tied to the chair by her wrists; that was why

she hadn't moved. Her legs were free. Her hair was dishevelled and her white blouse was torn; so she had struggled, some time since she had been kidnapped. Her eyes were glittering, and her lips were parted—and in spite of it all, there was fresh beauty about her which held Rollison's attention most; that a girl could look lovely in circumstances like these was remarkable in itself.

"Don't let him," she said huskily.

Rollison smiled. "Hallo, Kath, nice to see you again. Don't let who do what?"

"Don't let him kill Charles."

"Fond of Anson, all of a sudden?"

"Don't," she gasped, and shuddered. "He—he did everything he could to help me. Glebber—tortured him, and he wouldn't talk. It was——"

She didn't finish, but she had drawn a vivid picture of Glebber torturing Anson and Anson showing a courage which defeated pain. Rollison liked Glebber even less. He didn't think of his own position—yet. He went nearer the girl and smiled.

"You'll be all right. So will Charles. Glebber won't kill, there's too much danger."

"You don't know him! You——"

"It could be that he doesn't know me," murmured Rollison. "Eh, Gleb?" He slid his hand into his pocket and drew out a cigarette-case. "Smoke?" Glebber didn't move, and Rollison lit a cigarette and then placed it between the girl's lips. She drew on it gratefully. Rollison strolled away from her. They were the only three inside the room, but two other men were just outside the door, on guard. Glebber, knowing the district, had planned it well, and Glebber believed that he could now do exactly what he wanted.

Rollison lit a cigarette for himself.

"You know, Gleb," he said brightly, "I've never known a man make so many mistakes as you. Untie Kath, will you?"

Glebber didn't move.

"Just untie the cords," said Rollison. "It will make her more comfortable and it won't make any difference to you. If we can't be friends, let's be civilized."

He drew on the cigarette.

Glebber hesitated—then snapped his fingers. One of the men came in from the hall. Glebber motioned to the girl and the man untied the cords. When he had gone, Rollison went across to Kath and began to massage her wrists; he touched deep ridges made by the cord. As he worked he watched Glebber—and he knew that he had Glebber guessing; he had always had Glebber guessing, because he was the unknown factor. He still didn't know for certain what Glebber thought he had. Part of the map? He didn't think that would explain Glebber's tactics.

"After all," he said easily, "if you're charged with torturing our Kath, you'll get in even worse trouble with the police, won't you?"

"You talk too much again, Rollison. The police will not find me. I shall leave South Africa, and——" Glebber shrugged. "There is no need for you or the girl to be hurt, if you are sensible."

His eyes, as cold and expressionless as ever, were fixed on Rollison. He was lying. The very deadness of his look held hatred; once he had what he wanted he would kill. He was a killer by nature and nothing would stop him from killing, except—fear. He had lured Rollison here, taken desperate chances to kidnap him, Anson and the girl, because of something of importance to him.

Rollison said mildly: "You've been making mistakes from the time you sent O'Malley to pick me up, Gleb. Remember how sure you were that I couldn't get on good terms with the police?"

Glebber didn't answer, but his eyes narrowed a fraction; he was not so sure of himself as he tried to make out.

"Instead, we're buddies," murmured Rollison. "Very reasonable people, police, when you get to know them. They thought it would be a happy notion if I came chasing after you. Good thought, to tell them, wasn't it? I had quite a chat with them in Oudtshoorn."

He drew on his cigarette and beamed—and saw the glint spring into Glebber's eyes. The man moved his hand, very slowly, and slid the fingers into his pocket, leaving the thumb outside; that was characteristic of his trick of filling any movement with a touch of the sinister.

He didn't speak.

"A shock, isn't it?" Rollison moved across to Kathleen, who was sitting erect and staring first at him and then at Glebber. "Call it a day, Gleb. You lied your way out of it the first time. Your alibi was good and they had to let you go. But they didn't give up the chase. They hate your guts and they're going to get you. I told them the whole story, and they alerted the police throughout the Cape. You can kill us off, of course, and the police might only find the bodies; but you'd have to fly without getting what you want."

Glebber said: "I don't believe you."

"Please yourself."

"What is the name of the chief of police at Oudtshoorn?" asked Glebber thinly.

Rollison laughed; he had found that out in Cape Town. "Van Rabbik. Come again."

Glebber took his hand out of his pocket and turned away; his nearest sign of being disconcerted. Rollison put a hand on Kath's arm, and pressed gently. She looked up at him, her eyes blazing.

"It'll be all right," he said.

Glebber swung round. "So! You think it will be all right. I will show you." He strode across the room and pulled open the door.

"Carey!" he shouted. "Come here, and——"

He broke off, as if spluttering with rage. He did not realize that in losing his temper for that split second he had made his worst mistake. Rollison swung round, grabbed a heavy ashtray from the table near Kath's chair and hurled it at the man. It struck Glebber on the back of the head, and he lurched forward. Rollison moved, swift as light, bent down and pulled Glebber by his feet along the polished wooden floor. The remaining guard rushed

forward, gun in hand—but he didn't shoot. Footsteps thudded nearby. Rollison pulled Glebber to his feet and held him in front of him like a shield. He backed away, still hugging Glebber; now the man in the doorway dared not shoot.

Carey—the man whom Rollison had hit—came rushing into sight.

Rollison put out a foot and kicked the door to, let Glebber fall and flung himself at the door. The key wasn't in it. He stretched out for a chair and stuck it beneath the handle, as men outside thudded against it. The chair held.

Kath was on her feet, and started to pull at a heavy settee. Rollison helped her, and they pushed it across the door; the thudding shook the walls, but the door stayed shut. Rollison slid an arm round Kath's waist. When she looked at him he was smiling.

"Having a nice time?"

"What—will happen next?"

"Someone will come to the window," said Rollison. Leisurely, he went across to Glebber and lifted him up by the shoulders, dragged him across to an easy chair near the window and dropped him into it. Glebber's head lolled sideways. "It must have caught him quite a crack," murmured Rollison. "You know, Kath, our friend Glebber hasn't had enough opposition. Everyone has been so busy running around and doing what he told them to that he hasn't had time to realize that one day someone would hit him where it hurts." Rollison shifted the chair a few inches. "That's about right," he added, and stood back with his hands raised, as if admiring a work of art. "They'll come rushing at the window, and Glebber's face should give them quite a shock. It's enough to shock anyone. You move over to that corner." He pointed to a corner which couldn't be seen from the window. "That's right." He watched her move, and although she was tired, a touch of excitement gave her some of her vitality. "Now we'll finish the job," added Rollison, and fetched a tablelamp from a corner, placed

it on the arm of a chair near Glebber and tilted the shade; it was like a floodlight, and yet cast shadows; Glebber had never seemed uglier.

He stirred in his chair. Rollison went across, took Glebber's gun and put it in his pocket.

There was silence outside; a deadly silence. Kathleen felt it; Rollison appearing to be oblivious. He lit another cigarette and continued to study Glebber; but all the time he was listening for some sound of approach from outside; it would soon come. The man Carey and the others were being careful, which suggested that they had a surprise in the making.

The silence dragged on.

Kathleen said abruptly: "Do you know where Charles is?"

"At Ladysmith, in the care of a hefty innkeeper. You say hotel proprietor. He's not badly hurt. He was very anxious about you, by the way."

"If Glebber sends——"

"We won't worry about Glebber and Charles just now," said Rollison soothingly. "It's a long way to Ladysmith, and, believe me, the roads aren't good. Nothing will happen for a long time." In fact, Glebber could telephone to an agent in Ladysmith; but there was no need to tell Kathleen that. "In any case, the chap at the hotel will probably be so suspicious that he'll send for the police, and the police will ask questions."

"Didn't you——"

Rollison looked at the back of Glebber's head, and winked.

"I didn't mention Charles to the police—just that you had disappeared. I blamed Glebber and said I was coming after him. They promised all help. What happened here, Kath?"

"Glebber told you. He thinks you have something he wants. He's risking everything to get it, and that should tell you what it's worth."

"It gives me some idea," admitted Rollison. "If only I knew what he thinks I have."

"Don't you?"

"I thought I did, but now I'm not so sure."

She shivered. "I—don't know what he'll do. He frightened me badly."

Rollison smiled at her amiably, and gave no inkling of his anxiety. He was really anxious now; he couldn't understand the silence outside. Carey was dangerous, and Carey knew this house much better than he did. There was Jolly, too; he tried not to think of Jolly or of George. "Where's Mrs. Stein? Do you know?"

To his surprise Kath knew. "She came to a hotel near here. Glebber's been there."

Kathleen looked at the back of Glebber's head again, and shivered. Perhaps she guessed what Rollison knew; Glebber was conscious, but pretending not to hear.

The silence dragged on.

"Why—why don't they do something?" asked Kathleen huskily.

"Probably waiting for a signal from Gleb," said Rollison lightly. "They're so used to taking orders from him that they can't act on their own initiative." He forced a laugh but didn't feel amused; in this brooding silence there was menace—a menace he had felt too often since he had been here. "Gleb's been asleep long enough, we'll make him wake up and start chatting."

He moved towards the man—and as he did so he heard the faintest of sounds outside.

He showed himself at the window for a split second—and dodged back. A shot roared out, glass smashed and a bullet buried itself in the wall; it had passed within an inch of him.

He went to Kath and was out of range.

"That's better! I always like to know the trick they're going to play next. It took Carey a long time to think that one up. I——"

Another shot roared out.

"Shocking waste of ammunition," said Rollison. "Don't worry, there isn't a thing they can do."

But there was something they could do; he didn't know

what, but knew there must be. Glebber was foxing for a purpose. The long delay outside had been for a purpose. Now they were shooting to distract his attention from the real attack.

How would it come?

He looked up at the ceiling; it was quite blank, and painted white. There was little risk of anything coming from there. He looked at Glebber, and could see his profile; the man was still pretending to be unconscious, but his eyes were open a fraction—he was on the edge of expectancy.

Why?

Rollison's gaze roamed round the walls, and he saw nothing which suggested that there was a secret door. He moved forward.

"Don't!" cried Kathleen.

A shot roared out, and more glass smashed, but this time the bullet passed a yard from Rollison, there hadn't been any hope of hitting him. They were holding his attention until the main attack developed.

Would it come from the door?

He glanced at the door—and saw a movement inside the room. Sight of it went through him like a knife. The floor was of wood block and there were small rugs, all of Persian pattern; and one of the rugs moved. After the first shock he steadied.

Glebber muttered something.

"Did you speak?" asked Rollison lightly. He took a step towards Glebber, although Kathleen put a hand out to restrain him. "Say it again, Gleb." As he spoke he watched the moving rug; it moved again, there was a hole in the floor and someone was pressing against it. He touched a corner of it with his foot as Glebber muttered:

"Don't be a fool—police wouldn't——" His voice trailed off and his head lolled from side to side; he was feigning delirium.

Rollison lifted his right foot and brought it down heavily on the lump which was rising beneath the rug. He heard a gasp, then a thud. He snatched the rug aside, and

looked down into a cellar, one man on the floor, doubled up, and the other backing away. A step-ladder lay on its side. He heard a tinkling sound, as of fragile glass breaking, and there was a sharp smell; he knew that smell only too well—tear-gas. He pulled the gun out of his pocket, took careful aim and fired; it was shooting at sitting birds and he didn't like it, but he couldn't afford to be genteel. He hit each man in the right hand. As they cried out, another came rushing into sight, and Rollison shot him in the shoulder. He smelt the gas more strongly, backed away and pulled the rug over the opening. Then he took out his handkerchief, strode across the room and turned over a vase of flowers, so that the water soaked the handkerchief.

"What——" began Kathleen.

"Our luck again. Watch Glebber." Rollison thrust the gun into her hand, and didn't ask her whether she could use it. He turned to the hole in the floor, with the wet handkerchief over his face like a mask. Then he pulled the rug aside. Two of the men were on the floor, gasping and spluttering; the third was leaning against the wall. Tears were streaming down their faces, and Rollison had some idea of the pain they were feeling. He lowered himself hastily, held on to the edge of the hole—actually it was a trap door—and dropped. He trod on one man and stumbled, but quickly recovered himself. Already the gas was striking at his eyes; Glebber used all modern methods.

A door stood open.

He stood on a chair, fastened the hatch door, with the gas biting at him fiercely, then went swiftly through the pockets of the three men; he found two guns and another phial of tear-gas. He pocketed these; two guns in one pocket clattered noisily. He hurried out, and closed and locked the door. He found himself in a narrow passage with a door at the far end; he opened this and found a flight of stone stairs. He went up cautiously; the man who had fired through the window must have heard the fighting, and wouldn't lose much time coming round.

The back door wasn't locked.

Rollison opened it cautiously; no one was outside. He stepped into a kitchen—and sitting in a chair, bound hand and foot, was George.

Rollison cut the cords without speaking. George's eyes seemed to roll and he muttered something under his breath, but Rollison didn't wait to hear what it was.

"Rub your hands and ankles," he said, pushing a gun into George's hand. "Get out to the car as soon as you can." He left the kitchen, and found himself in a small room with no window—and saw Jolly lying on a bed, also bound. Jolly turned his eyes towards the door, took a deep breath and said:

"I'm very glad to see you're unhurt, sir."

"The imperturbable Jolly," Rollison said, using the knife on the cords. "With luck we'll soon get clear." He put a gun into Jolly's pocket. "Get out to the car—George is in the next room. And while you're outside, make sure that the other cars are immobilized, will you?" He spoke from the door as he went out, and found himself in an alcove which led off the hall. The front door was wide open, there was no sign of the man who had been outside, and he hadn't yet seen Carey. Was Carey the only man left to worry about, or were there others? He stepped on to the stoop and peered round the corner; light came from the window of the room where Kathleen and Glebber were. There was no sound, no shadow, no movement.

He took a step forward.

A shot came out of the darkness, and he felt a stinging pain at his left arm. He backed swiftly into the shadows. There had been a yellow flash not far away.

Another flash came, and a bullet smacked into the wall not far from his head. He would be much safer indoors, but he didn't like anything of this. He was in a jam, too; if he moved back into the house he would make a good target, and if he moved towards the lighted window his head and shoulders would show up in silhouette. He kept to the shadows, fighting against fierce anxiety.

What had happened to Kathleen?

Another shot broke the darkness.

He fired in its direction, then rushed back into the house. A bullet buried itself in the door as he got inside. He slammed the door. There might be several men outside, but it was much more likely that there were one or two—but was Glebber there?

Jolly appeared walking unsteadily, from cramp.

"Are you——"

"Don't come out yet," said Rollison sharply. He took a chance and rushed to the window of the room where he had left Kathleen.

No one was in here.

Glebber's chair was empty, and there was no sign of Kathleen. The smashed window was wide open, and he didn't need telling what had happened. He felt sick with fear for the girl and with anger with himself; he should never have left her.

He heard the engine of the car start up. A moment later headlights carved their way through the darkness. The car was half-way between the house and the road, and shone on the white gate. He didn't fire, but started to run, and there was sufficient light for him to see where he was going. The car was moving slowly, and he was gaining. He reached the drive immediately behind it, and fired at the wheels. It was a forlorn chance, but he made himself take careful aim. If a bullet went too high it might hit the girl.

He fancied that he heard it strike the metal of the car; then the car reached the gate and swung towards the right—away from the town.

Rollison held his breath and took careful aim again.

Chapter XV

MESSAGES

THE roar of the shot was loud in Rollison's ears; as it faded, the sound of the car engine came clearly from farther away, and the headlights carved out an impressive beam of light. Rollison put the gun away and stood watching. Jolly reached him, but said nothing until Rollison turned abruptly on his heel.

"Now we'll have to use the police."

"I fully agree, sir. I am desperately sorry about failing to immobilize the car, I could hardly move."

"Forget it." Rollison smiled bleakly as he walked up the drive and pushed his way into the hall. George came in from a back door, and stood looking helpless and worried. The bleakness faded from Rollison's face and he went across to the boy.

"Good work, George. You were very brave."

"Master." George almost choked.

"Go and look at the car and find out whether anything wants doing. If it does, bring it close to the house and use the light from the stoep."

"Yes, master." George went to the car, which was nearby.

Rollison went into the room where Kathleen had been.

There had been a fifth man at the house, and, with him and Carey outside and Glebber in, the girl had easily

been fooled, in spite of the gun. This was a small room. Rollison went into another, larger room. On a baby grand piano stood a photograph of Dawn Godley, looking at her loveliest; it was easy to imagine that she was smiling at him—or with him. There was a writing-table, and plenty to suggest that Glebber used this room regularly. He hadn't expected to discover that.

Why had Mrs. Stein come to Oudtshoorn, if she had known that Glebber was here? To make a deal with him?

There was another thing he hadn't expected; Kathleen had veered round completely since she and Anson had been prisoners together. It wasn't surprising; there was an attractive quality about Anson, and certainly he did not lack courage. But he had a way with women, and could have fooled the girl.

Her part wasn't yet fully explained, either; remember that. Was Jolly right? Was there reason for suspecting that she knew more than she had admitted?

As the thoughts came, Rollison stood by the writing-table with a telephone at hand. He forced his thoughts away from people to things; he ought to telephone the hotel at Ladysmith and make sure that Anson was warned; or the people who were looking after Anson. He had told Jolly that they must go to the police, yet he was still reluctant to. It might mean more trouble for Anson; possibly more for the girl. But when he weighed everything up, the greatest danger seemed likely to come from keeping too much to himself.

He lifted his hand for the telephone. The line might be cut outside—but Glebber probably hadn't had time to worry about that. He touched the receiver—and the bell rang. He started; the bell kept ringing. It seemed an age before he lifted the receiver.

"Hallo."

"I am glad you are still there," Glebber said.

That voice of Glebber's never altered. On the telephone or when face to face, the timbre was exactly the same. It was like the voice of a robot rather than of a man—ex-

cept that it had one quality which a robot couldn't have; menace. In spite of what had happened, in spite of the way Rollison had bested Glebber, the menace remained, like a fog about him. Everything Glebber said or did could mean danger; and Glebber was probably more desperate now than he had ever been.

"Are you there?" He did not speak quickly.

"I'm always here," said Rollison. "Wherever you are, I'm just a jump ahead. All the time. Going far tonight? Or is there time for us to have a little chat?"

"I am going too far for that," said Glebber. "Rollison, I warn you—do not go to the police about this. If you do ——" he paused.

Rollison had dealt with men as bad, perhaps worse, yet never with one who could say so much with a moment's silence. He could not bring himself to break it.

"I think you understand," said Glebber. "If you go to the police, I shall do unspeakable things to Miss Miller. We shall fight this out together, Rollison—you and I. The stake will be the list you have—and Miss Miller. Do you see what I mean?"

Rollison murmured: "Don't hurt her, Glebber."

He thought: "List?" It was the first he had heard of a list. This must be the "property" he was supposed to have got from Stein—a list, not part of the map.

He rang off, and stood smoothing down his hair. He heard George talking, presumably to Jolly, and George sounded excited. Rollison took no notice, but stared out of the window into the darkness. Glebber was not sure that he had worked with the police, hoped there was a chance of keeping the fight between themselves. It was impossible to believe anything that Glebber said, but he was capable of doing unspeakable things to the girl. He would probably find out, with little trouble, whether the Oudtshoorn police knew anything about Rollison's visit. The telephone call suggested that he knew that part of the story wasn't true.

George was still talking, wailing almost. Jolly's foot-

steps sounded, drawing nearer, he was a herald of bad news; Rollison was sure of it, and doubly sure as Jolly entered glum-faced.

"Well?" asked Rollison abruptly.

"We cannot drive the car tonight, sir. The petrol tank was holed. We have searched everywhere, and cannot find any petrol. George says that he can patch the tank but I have told him not to trouble. Wouldn't it be better if we stayed here?" Jolly was pleading, for he did not think there would be much chance of persuading Rollison to stop the chase for the night. "There are comfortable beds, and it is already past three o'clock."

"I see," said Rollison heavily.

"Have you telephoned the police?"

Rollison hesitated.

"It is the *only* thing to do——" Jolly began.

"The only thing a sensible man would do, Jolly." Rollison lit a cigarette and flicked the match into a corner of the room. "But I've always been a fool, remember? If we go to the police, Glebber will find out, and what he might do to the girl is no one's business. If we keep away there's a chance for her. So we keep away. But we telephone Ladysmith and make sure that Anson doesn't run into more trouble." He lifted the receiver.

The proprietor of the hotel at Ladysmith did not protest at being woken and dragged out of bed. He was too worried. He had been along to Anson's room just before going to bed—that was at eleven o'clock. Anson had disappeared. His clothes had gone, apparently he had dressed and gone off on his own. He wasn't well enough to wander about at night, he needed a few days in bed. The proprietor's wife, Rollison was assured, was distracted.

Rollison was soothing. . . .

He replaced the receiver after a while.

Jolly said softly: "So Glebber has them both again."

"Or Anson came round and decided that he wasn't safe

there." Rollison stubbed out his cigarette. He guessed what Jolly was thinking, and also knew that Jolly was probably right; but Rollison was afraid for the girl; if he went to the police, nothing would save her.

"You're right about one thing, Jolly," he said abruptly. "We want some sleep."

"The police——"

"No police."

"But Glebber can go where he likes, you have no way of finding out where he might be, you've no chance." Jolly was almost shrill.

Rollison leaned across the desk and picked up the photograph of Dawn Godley.

"Just one way," he said.

Rollison woke up and flickered his eyes. It was daylight. He did not remember where he was on that first moment of waking. All he heard was a soft insistent voice—a voice he had often heard, which had become part of his life. Not Glebber's voice. With that thought he remembered Glebber and all that had happened, and opened his eyes. Jolly stood by the side of the bed, with a tea-tray balanced on his right hand. At home, he would have had the morning newspapers tucked under his other arm. There was no newspaper, but there was a large envelope. He had shaved; he looked as fresh as he ever would, considering his lined face and the dark patches under his eyes.

"Good morning, sir," he said. "It is nearly nine o'clock. Shall I draw the curtains, or shall I leave them?"

Rollison breathed: "Leave them. Don't wake me out of this dream. If you draw them I'll see London's roof-tops, and I couldn't bear that."

"Couldn't you, sir?" Jolly sounded as if he would like to see the grey slates of London more than anything else in the world. "I will run your bath in fifteen minutes. George is preparing breakfast. He has taken his car to the

garage and it is being repaired—he was able to free-wheel it down."

"Good for George. Good for everyone. Give me my cigarettes, will you?"

Jolly gave him his cigarettes, struck a match, then put the envelope down beside the tea-tray at the side of the bed, and went out; one cup of tea was already poured. Rollison sipped it, smoked and eyed the envelope; it was important, or Jolly would not have brought it in. Could it be of real significance? There had been a look in Jolly's eyes which suggested that he was subduing a mood of triumph, but one could never be quite sure with Jolly. Rollison looked at the bedside table and an extension to the telephone; Glebber believed in luxury. The telephone could connect Rollison with anyone—even with Dawn; lovely Dawn. But could he ask her what he wanted to ask, on the telephone? Wouldn't it be better to get to the nearest airfield and fly back to Cape Town? From Cape Town he could reach anywhere in the Union within a few hours, there was no need to go on by road. He pictured Dawn as he had first seen her, entering the Vineyard; and as she had been at his hotel room. He wished he could be sure of her, but couldn't be, she might be as treacherous as Glebber or O'Malley. He couldn't judge her mood over the telephone; face to face would be better.

He poured out another cup of tea, picked up the envelope—and the telephone bell rang. It startled him again, but not so much as the night before. This might be a call for Glebber. He lifted the receiver and answered guardedly. He heard a sound which suggested that Jolly was at the main instrument in the other room.

"Hallo?"

"That Rollison?" a man demanded. It wasn't Glebber, but he had a voice which Rollison wasn't likely to forget in a hurry.

"Poor Carey," Rollison said. "That man who is on the way to being hanged. How are you?"

"You talk too much," Carey said nastily. "I've a mes-

sage for you from G. Do what he told you. Understand? Just do what he told you, and the girl will get a break."

He rang off without another word.

Glebber was using the girl almost desperately; so Glebber was really frightened of what would happen if Rollison went to the police. A good thing; but Glebber's promises meant nothing, there was no way of being certain that the girl was all right.

Rollison put down the receiver and finished his tea, then opened the envelope. Jolly appeared at the door.

"Hear that?" asked Rollison.

"Yes, sir. I think Glebber is a frightned man."

"Incredible. We agree about something. I wonder what's got into him?"

Jolly's lips curved, and there was a gleam in his eyes; this was a Jolly triumphant.

"I could make a guess, sir. In the East End of London they would say that he's going the way of all people who try to fight against the Toff." Jolly actually chuckled.

"Flattering but probably not the explanation," Rollison said. "He's at the old game of playing for time. Which means that it isn't on our side. Where's the nearest airfield, Jolly?"

"You can charter a plane from here, sir."

Rollison looked surprised.

"I made inquiries by telephone before you woke," said Jolly smoothly. "There is a plane available. I arranged that we should be informed if it were needed for anyone else, and as we've no message, I assume that it can still be called upon. What time would you like it?"

Rollison looked at his watch.

"Eleven o'clock," he said. "Sharp. I'll go to Cape Town. You and George will take the car to some spot on a main road—the nearest is the Garden Route, I believe, somewhere near George. Or is it that place which begins with a K?"

"You have to go through George to reach Knysna," Jolly said blandly. "We will go to Knysna, sir. I shall tele-

phone you this afternoon at your hotel in Cape Town in case you have further instructions. I'll run your bath now." He glanced at the envelope. "Have you——"

"No. I haven't looked at it yet."

"I should, soon," said Jolly, and went out, wearing a smile which, on anyone else, would have been unbearably superior.

Rollison watched the door close, then turned back to the envelope. It contained lists of names and addresses, and they meant precisely nothing at first glance; yet Jolly had read significance into them—and Glebber wanted a list.

Rollison flipped over the pages; and slowly he began to smile; for on one page, in the middle, was a succinct typewritten instruction: "If in danger from police, destroy completely."

Rollison saw the fantastic panorama of Cape Town from the air, in a perfect sunlit afternoon. The white surf rolled gently against the innumerable beaches, and the bays were fringed with white and pale gold sand. The houses looked tiny, and the roofs were gay; so were the flowers, which made carpets of colours. He watched as the four-seater aircraft gradually lost height, circling round the airport. He tried to pick out the Cape Hotel, and failed; but he could see the streets, laid out so symmetrically in the centre of the town.

Other aircraft were on the ground; one took off, and he watched it rise, glistening in the sun, circle twice and then make off. He was alone in the plane, except for the pilot, whose head he could see.

It was a little after one o'clock.

He saw the airfield buildings, picked out a big machine, probably European, chuckled and wondered what Dawn would have to say when she saw him. He was in a mood for laughter, and had been since he had read that typewritten note. It had been at the front of the papers, which Jolly had found. In a mood to enjoy himself, Jolly had slipped it into the middle.

People showed up as little dots down below, and gradually became larger. Men, and here and there a woman, moved about. Soon they were ready to land, and the pilot went straight in; they touched down and taxied to a standstill.

Rollison stood up as the pilot came towards him.

"Wonderful trip. Thanks."

"Glad you enjoyed it. I say," said the pilot, a youngish man with red hair, "aren't you Richard Rollison? Chap they call the Toff?"

"Silly things, nicknames."

"I don't know," said the pilot. "Mine is—one guess! I've been Ginger since I was knee high, but—well, I'm proud to meet you."

"My dear chap!"

"No, I mean it," insisted the pilot. "Anytime I can do anything else for you, let me know, won't you? I'll be here until I get another job. We'd better be off. No Customs or anything like that—have you a car waiting for you?"

"A taxi."

"That's okay, then." The pilot offered his hand, and Rollison gripped it and went off. Not far away were several cars—he couldn't yet tell whether they were taxis, but Jolly had made the arrangements by telephone, and Jolly wouldn't have slipped up. It was warm, but there was a stiff breeze. He felt relaxed after the trip and the good if short night. He was much less worried than he had been about Kathleen, although there were moments when he wondered whether he was justified in that. Glebber might even be bluffing. He laughed at himself. In the rush to get away Glebber had left behind a vital record that he did not want to fall into the hands of the police. Rollison wandered when he would discover his loss. It was ironical, he reflected, that after suspecting him of having the list when he hadn't, Glebber had now almost given him this one on a plate. But it gave no clue to the list

or "property" that he was supposed to have got from Stein.

Anson's disappearance worried Rollison more than Kathleen's.

Chauffeurs were standing at two of the cars; they were probably taxi-drivers. He hurried towards them, and one man obviously recognized him and raised a hand. Rollison said:

"I'm Rollison. Are you——"

He broke off abruptly, for a face appeared at the window of another car; not a taxi, but a stream-lined Hudson. It was Dawn Godley.

Rollison paid off the taxi and got into the Hudson. Dawn let in the clutch and drove off. They didn't say a word. She drove with an ease he might have expected, and once she was out of the airfield she drove fast. He had Glebber's list of names with him, and for all he knew she might be driving him into a trap. He didn't think much about that, but kept his left hand in his pocket, about his gun.

Rest and relaxation were over.

They drove through one end of the city—and still neither of them said a word. Then Dawn turned into a residential quarter of Sea Point, and pulled up outside a low-roofed block of flats. As she switched off the engine, she said:

"Did you have a good trip?"

"First-class."

"I'm so glad." They climbed out, and she rested a hand on his arm. "He told me you were on the way."

"Omniscient Gleb," murmured Rollison. "Agents all over the place, hasn't he?"

She shot him a quick sideways glance.

"So you found the other list."

"I found the only one I've ever had."

Dawn stared—and began to laugh. She couldn't stop herself, went on and on. When at last she stopped, she said huskily:

"It's perfect! He was sure you had one before—the copy Stein stole before he went to England. Now you have got one—because Glebber left it for you to pick up!"

It was funny but it didn't make him smile. Stein's copy was probably in a London bank; somewhere safe. If Rollison had known—but where would wishing get him?

"Does Glebber know he's lost this?"

"Yes. He's mad about it, but not half as mad as he'd be if he knew you never had Stein's copy. He thinks you've got two copies of the same list now, so he doesn't realize how things have changed."

"And have they changed! I'm going to put my list in a very safe place."

Dawn laughed.

"Don't worry. I shan't try to get it from you."

"I had to be on the safe side," murmured Rollison. "Where are we going?"

"To my flat."

"Luncheon?"

"Of course—I knew about the time you'd arrive."

"I see," said Rollison. The envelope was bulky in his pocket, and she probably guessed he had it with him. It had been folly to bring it—no, not that; folly to come with her. He should have gone to the hotel and lodged the envelope in the manager's safe, and then dealt with Dawn. He looked at her, and she was so breathlessly lovely that it was hard to believe that she could be bad.

They reached the front entrance.

He said: "My pet, I've had a lapse of memory, I have to make a visit." He turned abruptly, and hurried back towards the car. "I won't be long." He was past the car before she started after him, and obviously she realized that she would have no chance of catching up. The flats were in a quiet street, but there were shops at the corner. He reached the first, thinking fast. It would be easy and safe to post the envelope to himself at the hotel; safer, perhaps, to send it poste restante, Cape Town G.P.O. He looked round, and made sure that he wasn't being fol-

lowed, but several people were in sight and there was no certain way of being sure that he wasn't watched; at a moment like this Glebber's agents seemed likely to be everywhere. Absurd: he thought it safer to assume that he was being watched.

He saw a branch of a bank, a little way along the street, round the corner from the flat. He hurried inside. Ten minutes later, the envelope, sealed and with his signature scrawled across the seal, was in the strong room. He had refused a receipt and arranged that withdrawal could only be made by him in person.

He went out and strolled back to the flat.

Dawn wasn't downstairs waiting for him. He studied the names and the flat numbers on a board inside the wide hall; her flat was Number 7. There was no lift. He went up the stairs, pondering. She would guess why he had gone, but short of staging a bank hold-up, there was nothing Glebber or anyone else could do about those papers now.

The flats seemed roomy and spacious and the passages were wide and beautifully decorated; everything about Glebber spelt money, and the secret of his wealth was probably in that list.

Rollison rang the bell.

There was a moment's silence; then footsteps. He didn't think they were Dawn's. A coloured girl opened the door and beamed at him; it would be easy to think that she was nervous, her grin was so expansive. He stepped inside, and the girl closed the door.

"Is that you, Richard?" Dawn called.

"Yes. Sorry I'm late. I hope nothing's spoiled." He went towards the room where he had heard her voice, and saw her standing by a cocktail cabinet, pouring drinks. All was well; he need not have worried about a trick, he could trust her—up to a point, at least. He stood for a moment to study her, and everything he had thought about her beauty was confirmed. She turned, glass in one hand, bottle in another, and smiled. He went forward—and as

he did so, felt the swift warning which had come to his aid a hundred times in the past but was too late now.

Someone behind the door pushed and slammed it.

Rollison swung round.

"Hallo, pal," said Carey.

Chapter XVI

TRUTH OR NOT?

CAREY stood grinning, with a gun in his hand.

Dawn moved away from the cocktail cabinet, put the glass and bottle down quickly and dropped into a chair. She didn't look at Rollison. He made no attempt to reach the door, but went forward, picked up the glass and sniffed it; it was whisky.

"I'd rather have gin as an appetizer," he said, and picked up an unopened bottle of South African gin and began to open it.

He hadn't studied Carey properly before; he did now.

Carey was big and, in a rugged way, good-looking; a man no one would pass in the street without a second glance. He was physically powerful, too. It was the look in his eyes, which were set wide apart and of a curious pale blue, that Rollison didn't like. He was dressed in well-cut Palm Beach suiting, and no longer looked the gangster he had appeared to be the previous night.

He still grinned.

"Who asked you to have a drink?"

"Why, dear Dawn," said Rollison. "It's her flat, isn't it?"

"*Glebber* pays the rent."

"Oh, Gleb wouldn't mind," said Rollison, and poured himself a drink, then added water. "Here's bad luck to you both."

Dawn said: "The trouble with you is that you're too clever."

"Don't you believe it," said Carey. "He'll find out about

that, before long." He kept his gun in his hand, and went on: "Take his gun away, Dawn."

The woman stood up.

Rollison put his hand to his pocket.

"Keep still!" snapped Carey.

Rollison shrugged. "Please yourself. I was going to save her the trouble of picking my pocket. Not that it would worry her much, she's used to most kinds of crime, I fancy." He moved his hand with startling speed, snatched out the gun, tossed it into the air and caught it by the barrel; then he held it out to Dawn.

She took it, and she avoided his eyes.

"That's better," Carey said. "Listen, Rollison. I want that list."

"I'll bet you do."

"And I'm going to get it."

"One day, possibly. Not today. Where's Gleb? I only deal with principals."

"If you don't hand over that list," said Carey, "you won't like what will happen to the girl—and to young Anson." He seemed to hope that mention of Anson would shake Rollison; and he was not rewarded. He went on, almost laboriously: "We collected Anson from Ladysmith. It doesn't matter where you go in South Africa, Glebber has his agents. You can't move without him knowing what's happening. We soon collected Anson. He's with the girl now—they'll like being together again." He sneered, but lacked his normal self-confidence, he was nervous of Rollison's next step. "Don't get anything wrong, Rollison. Glebber will ease off the couple if he gets that list back. If he doesn't——" Carey shrugged, and ran a finger across his throat.

"Nice people," murmured Rollison. "No deal."

Carey began to go red in the face.

"I've told you——"

"You should listen occasionally," said Rollison. "Tell Glebber I'll deal with him and no one else. You can also tell him that I might exchange the list for three things. Kath Miller—unhurt. Anson—hurt no more than he is

now. And Glebber's story of the diamond field. Certainly nothing less. Even when I've got those three, he won't get the list until he's proved he's going to behave himself."

"You'll never put that over *Glebber,*" breathed Carey. "Where's the list?"

"Search me."

Carey snapped: "I'll certainly do that!" He raised his voice, and on the last syllable the door opened and another man came in—small and wiry, and carrying a gun. He covered Rollison, watching him much as he might watch a giant mamba.

Rollison finished his drink and put his glass down. The newcomer patted his pockets, then delved his hand into them. He took everything out, and carried them across to Carey, but Carey hardly troubled to look at them after the first glance. Rollison watched all this in silence, until Carey put everything on a table.

"Satisfied?"

"Where's that list?"

"In a place where even Glebber doesn't have his agents," said Rollison, "and I don't mean with the police—yet. Go and tell Glebber all about this, and let Dawn and me have a meal in peace."

He lit a cigarette.

Carey hesitated.

Rollison shrugged his shoulders, went across to the woman, who was sitting down again and sat on the arm of her chair. She looked up at him; and it was hard to believe that those eyes were a Delilah's. She looked away quickly.

The little man said: "What next?"

"I'll go tell Glebber," said Carey.

"What about me?"

"You can scram," Carey said.

It was quiet in the flat when they had gone. Rollison continued to look at the woman, while sitting on the arm of her chair; and now she looked at him with greater

candour. He waited for her to speak; obviously she was a long time making up her mind, and was going to choose her words carefully.

She stood up suddenly and moved away.

"I hope you weren't fooling about luncheon, too," said Rollison lightly.

"I wasn't fooling about anything," she said. "I didn't know Carey was here. He came after I'd left, and frightened Hannah—my maid—into saying nothing. I had to play up to him, or he would have known I was on your side."

"Are you?" Rollison asked heavily.

"You know I am. I can still help, if I'd let him know the truth——"

"Truth, my pet? Do you know anything about it?"

"Richard, I want to help. You must see that I had to fool Carey."

"Let's forget it and talk about something pleasant."

"I don't want to forget it—I want you to know the truth. I had to do what Carey said. He'll tell Glebber, and Glebber will think he can still trust me. And he'll be wrong. I can help you more than you realize."

"Oh, yes," said Rollison. "You can feed me! Is Hannah the cook, too?"

Dawn didn't try again.

Hannah was not only a cook but a queen of cooks. For the first time since he had arrived in the country Rollison had paw-paw in fruit salad and thoroughly enjoyed it. He kept what conversation there was on a light level. Dawn was obviously suffering considerable strain, but he did nothing to ease it. He watched her more closely than she realized, trying to get at the truth. Her distress seemed genuine; but he couldn't trust her, only a fool would trust her now. He wasn't such a fool as that. She might still be trying to worm her way into his confidence and so find an ace for Glebber to use.

After coffee she said in a tense voice:

"I can't keep this up any longer."

"Sorry." Rollison sprang to his feet. "I'll go."

"You haven't really a chance against him, on your own," she said. "I want to help. I——"

"All right. Was that true about Anson?"

"Yes."

"How much more do you know?"

She drew a deep breath. "Most of the story, I think. I saw Carey this morning—I didn't know he was coming back later, but I don't suppose you'll ever believe that. He told me what had happened."

"What about Kath Miller?" asked Rollison.

"She is a hostage. That's all."

Rollison didn't speak.

She said: "I can still help you. Carey will tell me what Glebber says. I can find out what he intends to do. I can tell you—if you'll believe me."

"Where is Glebber?"

"I'm not sure," she said. "Carey will be able to tell me later. I think he's at a little place called Umtata, on the Johannesburg Road. Glebber always travels by road when he can, he hates flying."

"That's two things he hates."

She looked puzzled.

"I don't understand you."

"Don't you?" asked Rollison. "You will, before it's over." He moved away. "Thanks for the lunch! Congratulate Hannah for me—she and George would make a good pair."

He smiled and raised his hand to his forehead in mock salute, then went out. He had a glimpse of her, standing quite still and with a strained look in her eyes. He closed the door softly and walked across the hall of the flat. Out in the passage he wiped his forehead.

It was very quiet here.

He wondered if Carey had left the small wiry man outside, but there was no sign of him. He walked past the Hudson towards the shops at the corner, and when he passed the bank, the doors were closed. At the next corner he stopped and looked round. He was being followed

by a coloured man who had been near the entrance to the flat.

He was followed right to the door of the Cape Hotel.

He went up to his room and kicked off his shoes, then lay flat on the bed, with his hands behind his head, and stared up at the ceiling. He didn't notice the ceiling. Some facts didn't add up to the right total. He knew what Jolly was thinking; that he was crazier than ever not to take the whole story to the police. Was he?

He drew a balance mentally.

He had that list, and Glebber and Kathleen and Anson. Glebber had seen Mrs. Stein, and probably had the whole of the map. From the moment Glebber had telephoned at Oudtshoorn he had been sure that the man was really worried. That wasn't all. Dawn, Anson, Kathleen—each played a part he didn't yet understand. He could deal with Glebber—but was Glebber the only man who mattered?

He must concentrate on Glebber.

Glebber was probably desperate enough about the list to make a deal in person. He might be bluffed into releasing Kathleen and Anson before being given the list. What was the best way of fooling Glebber? He was completely used to success; opposition had stung him, defeat had hurt much more. So Glebber wasn't at his best. If he scored what appeared to be a great triumph he would probably get careless. The task was to fool Glebber and to take advantage of his known weakness.

Rollison lay there, scheming.

After a while the telephone bell rang. Glebber?

"Rollison speaking," he said.

"Mr. Rollison!" It was a youthful, eager voice—of de Beer of *Die Kornoet*. "Any news of Keith Miller?"

"Sorry," said Rollison.

"It's hell! Can't you give me any idea where I might find her? The police seem hopeless."

"They're trying to crack a tough nut."

"She can't disappear like this. The police haven't found Anson, either. I've had reports of a lot of funny

things happening since you left the Cape. Have you seen Glebber again?"

"Come and see me," said Rollison. "Unofficially."

"I'll be over in two shakes!" The reporter rang off, and Rollison replaced the receiver. He lay in exactly the same position as before, but his mind was working more smoothly. The Press would know as much as anyone about Glebber—and hadn't yet told him everything they knew.

He had been there for ten minutes when the telephone bell rang again.

"Rollison speaking."

"Hold on, please, I have a trunk call for you."

"Thanks." Rollison held on, and hoped it was Glebber; he wanted a sign that the man was really cracking. There was a long delay, before a voice much more familiar than Glebber's came on the line.

"Good afternoon, sir," said Jolly.

"Why, hallo." Rollison sat up. "All well?"

"Perfectly, sir, thank you." Jolly sounded as if he were in the next room. "How are things in Cape Town?"

"Flourishing. Minor excitements and high hopes."

"I beg of you, sir, not to take wild chances," said Jolly earnestly. "It would be different if you were familiar with the country and the people, but even you can't be yet."

"Right," said Rollison cheerfully. "Now I want you and George to go to Umtata, on the Johannesburg road. Umtata. Got that?"

"Yes, sir. But——"

"Book in at the best hotel, or whatever there is, and wait till you hear from me."

"Very well, sir." Jolly hesitated. Rollison sensed that is he waited. "I don't want to be too insistent, but you will take great care, sir, won't you?"

"Yes, Jolly."

"Thank you, sir. Good-bye."

Rollison heard the receiver go down, replaced his own, and pictured Jolly's expression as he guessed it would be.

he was smiling faintly when the telephone bell rang for the third time. It was de Beer, speaking from the hall.

"Quick work," said Rollison. "Come straight up, will you?"

"I'm on my way." De Beer rang off, and Rollison lay waiting for him, until he heard the sound of footsteps outside. He turned the handle of the door as de Beer banged on it. The youngster's eagerness showed as he rushed into the room, looking at Rollison as if he expected to see a miracle performed in front of his eyes.

"So you have seen Glebber again." He continued where the telephone conversation had broken off. "You're fantastic! What's the situation?"

Rollison said soberly: "Bad."

"You mean—for Kath?"

"Yes."

"Oh." De Beer moved across to a chair and sat down. He studied the carpet, and then Rollison's eyes. "Isn't there anything you can do? Anything you can tell the police?"

"I don't think it would help."

De Beer had nothing to say.

"Something might," said Rollison. "I want to know everything there is to know about Glebber. He's a big power in the land. When I know his strength and his weakness, I think something can be worked. How long has he been operating in the Cape?"

"A lot longer than I," said de Beer. "He's got a finger in everything, not only in the Cape. The police have never been able to get him, because he has so many agents—in all classes. Rich, poor, European, coloured—he has his claws in them all. The amazing thing is that everyone knows that he's as crooked as they come, and no one has ever been able to prove it. He's been on trial twice, and each time he's got off. He's been under suspicion a thousand times, but always has an alibi, or lets someone else take the rap. He's become almost a tradition in South Africa. He's in gold, diamonds, real estate—everything.

There are times when I think it's crazy for you to have a stab at him, and yet—I'd say you've got nearer to getting him rattled than anyone else."

Rollison let that pass.

"What particular crime does he specialize in?"

"None. He's in everything. He gets private information about commodity markets, he's always the first with news of new gold or diamond fields. He's believed to handle a lot of dagga—that's our home-made drug, you know, foul stuff. He smuggles liquor to the coloureds and natives, there isn't a filthy pie in which he hasn't a thick finger. It's absolutely damnable that he's been able to get away with it. There's a rumour that he has agents in every little village and dozens in the big towns. If he wants to know anything about the locality, he simply gets in touch with his agents. I think it's true."

"Yes," murmured Rollison. "It's true."

"You *know?*"

"Pretty well. What part does Dawn Godley play in all this?"

"It's a funny thing about Dawn Godley," de Beer said musingly. "He tied up with her about a couple of years ago. He smashed a man she was going to marry. Ruined him, and drove him to suicide. Rumour—you know how rumour goes, and we get most of it on the paper—said that he was really serious about her. In love and all that. I don't know. I do know most people were surprised when she threw in her lot with him, she wasn't in love with this chap who killed himself. You never can tell with women, can you?"

"No. Mind if I change the subject? Anson had a dog, a big thing half mastiff and half ridgeback, I think. Are ridgebacks trained?"

"Great Scott, yes."

"Think I could get hold of one that would really do what I wanted?"

"I'm pretty sure you could, but I don't get you."

"If the trick works, you will," said Rollison. "If you really want to lend a hand, find me a ridgeback—any

big dog, for that matter—which will take orders. Perfectly trained as a man-hunter, who'll worry a man without doing any serious harm, and who'll obey when he's called off. You can guess the kind of thing I mean."

"I'll see what I can do, but I don't see how it can help Kath. Rollison, I don't mind telling you that Kath Miller is the most popular girl among——" He broke off. "Well, you know what I mean."

"I know what you mean," Rollison said drily.

"When do you want this brute?"

"Soon. Tonight. Can you?"

"It's a tall order, but I think I can fix it. Is there anything else?"

Rollison said almost lazily: "Yes. I'd like to find a little spot where I can hide. Where Glebber isn't likely to find me." He smiled at de Beer's expression, and went on: "Where I could hide something Glebber's very anxious to find, too."

"Oh, I see." De Beer frowned in concentration; then his face cleared. "I think I know just the spot. It's some way up the mountain—Table Mountain, that is. A small cave. First discovered it when I was a kid, used to go there with some friends, but I don't often go there these days. It's easy enough to get at, once you know the way. I doubt if you'd find it by yourself, first time."

"Will you show me the place?"

"Of course."

"Fine," said Rollison. "And I want one or two reliable men, who'll watch the place for me."

"Dawn," said Rollison into the telephone, "I must see you urgently. Meet me at the bus terminus near de Waal highway, will you? At dusk."

"Yes," she said unhesitatingly.

He waited near a hired car as others passed at speed, and a few coloured people walked slowly, watching him. Any one of these might be Glebber's agents. He should have named a time—dusk had been too vague. It was

already dusk. Then he saw a taxi draw up, and Dawn get out. The taxi drove off. Dawn came towards Rollison, and he opened the door of his car. Without a word he helped her in, then took the wheel. As they drove off she looked at him intently.

"What is it?"

"My trick, this time." He drove fast up the winding road towards the foot of the mountain; then along a track which cars seldom travelled. She didn't speak. He found the spot without difficulty—they had to walk a hundred yards from the car. It was dark and the wind was coming up, and below them the lights of Cape Town showed like a jewelled island.

"What are you going to do?" Dawn whispered.

"You're bait for Glebber," Rollison said. "Sorry, my pet."

He left her—and hated leaving her, although the guards were near at hand, and she could come to no harm.

Just two hours later Glebber came on the telephone.

Chapter XVII

TRIP NORTH

Rollison held the receiver more tightly as he heard Glebber's voice. The hotel room was very quiet. It was nearly nine, and he had dined in his room; the tray, with the used crockery and knives and forks, was on a small table.

Rollison stood still as death.

"I wondered how long you would be," he said.

"Where is Mrs. Godley?" The flat voice seemed to hold no expression.

"Where I want her to be."

"Rollison——"

Rollison said softly: "Glebber, we've reached the end of talking. I want the Miller girl and Anson—and I want them quickly. When they're free I'll talk business. Until then, business is out. Unless I've had results by midday tomorrow that list goes to the police, and you don't see Dawn again. Lovely woman, isn't she?"

He heard Glebber catch his breath.

"And I'm not joking," Rollison said.

It might be the moment to ring off, but he stood waiting. He could picture Glebber, and knew exactly what he looked like; he could imagine that the snake-like venom showed in his cruel eyes.

Glebber said: "I am in Johannesburg. Come to the Carlton Hotel, and you will find a message."

He rang off.

Rollison telephoned the airport; the man whose plane he had chartered from Oudtshoorn was still there. Rollison wasted little time; the aircraft would be ready for a flight to Umtata to pick up Jolly and George, and then to Johannesburg, within an hour.

"I'll be ready on the dot," said the pilot.

"Fine. Thanks. Oh, we shall probably have a dog as passenger, too."

"Suits me," said the pilot.

Rollison rang off. De Beer hadn't brought the dog and hadn't sent a message; it might be necessary to leave without it. He rang de Beer's number, but there was no answer. He lit a cigarette, packed what he would need for a couple of nights, told the clerk downstairs that he would be away for a few days and sat on the edge of the bed. He saw a mental picture of Dawn Godley. Should he leave her where she was indefinitely? She was safe enough, although she would be frightened. That wouldn't hurt her.

The telephone bell rang.

"Hallo," said de Beer brightly. "I've fixed everything. I'm downstairs with the dog—fierce brute to strangers, but perfectly trained, and I'm assured you can handle him, if you know what you have to say. I've learned the drill."

"Fine." Rollison felt an inward excitement. "I'll come right down."

He found de Beer holding on to the dog by a short leash, and porters and boys regarding it with obvious nervousness. It was a big creature, with the fur along the middle of its back running the wrong way; the first thoroughbred ridgeback he'd seen.

"We'll have some lessons outside," Rollison said.

The dog obeyed de Beer. . . .

Half an hour later Rollison felt that there was a reasonable chance that it would do what he told it. It had been police trained; de Beer didn't explain how he had managed to get possession of it.

"What's next?" de Beer asked.

"From you—patience. I'll be in touch with you as soon as I can," Rollison said.

He drove up the road to Table Mountain and the cave, with the dog behind him. Outside the range of the street lights there was only darkness. When he got out of the car the wind struck at him, although the night was clear and the lights below shone out with startling brightness. He used a powerful torch and hoped that he would be able to find his way.

The eerie darkness, the strange noises made by the wind and the knowledge of what lay ahead pressed hard on his nerves. He felt a wild sense of relief when he found the entrance to the cave. He called out.

Dawn answered him.

In the light of the torch she looked pale. Her eyes seem very bright. They walked in silence to the car, and when Rollison opened the door the dog growled. Dawn drew back.

"What's that?"

"A friend for Glebber," said Rollison.

"He—he hates dogs. Like some people hate snakes and others spiders."

"I had an aunt who couldn't bear cats," said Rollison. "Same principle. Yes, I knew Gleb wasn't fond of dogs. All right, Boy." The dog growled again, but settled down on the rear seat. Rollison sent the guards off. Dawn got in and they drove away. It seemed to Rollison that he had been doing this, with Dawn for company, for a long time. There was a rightness about it. As they watched the lights below them he realized what was the matter with him. From the moment he had first seen her he had been attracted; and the attraction was stronger now than it had been at first. That made her more dangerous than she knew, for she might be able to warp his judgment.

"Where are we going?"

"Johannesburg, second stop."

"Have you heard from Glebber?"

"You proved the right bait. He must be fond of you."
She didn't answer.
"Are we going to fly?"
"Yes."
"Glebber is probably watching the airfield," she said.
"He's expecting me, anyhow."
"He won't expect me to be with you."
"Won't he?" asked Rollison.

It was three hours before they reached Umtata. Jolly had arranged for them to have two rooms for the night. The manager could not have been more helpful. They were off again at seven next morning; before ten they touched down at a small airfield near Johannesburg. Jolly and Dawn stayed at a small hotel on the outskirts of the town, with George and the dog near by. Rollison went into the city itself, driven by a taxi-driver who kept himself to himself.

The great pale grey-yellow mounds, dug out of the mines, showed up brightly in the morning sun. Traffic was thicker than any Rollison had yet found in South Africa. There was an air of bustle, different from Cape Town—just as the city was different. Here was New York in miniature, with stunted skyscrapers and narrow streets, jammed thick with traffic and traffic lights at nearly every cross-roads. The cabby threaded skilfully through the traffic, and set Rollison down outside the Carlton, where a uniformed porter sprang forward to open the door. In a window next to the hotel was a range of women's hats—fantastic hats with enormous brims. Rollison glanced at them as he went into the hotel.

He did not go straight to the desk, but waited. The hall was built in a circle—porter and cigarette shop on one side, and receptionist and cashier on the other. Spaced out round the walls were red chairs. Rollison sat in one, and waited; he did not think that he was being watched, although Glebber would almost certainly have someone here.

Ten minutes passed, nothing happened.

Rollison went to the Inquiries Desk.

"Oh, yes," said the girl behind the desk, "there is a message for you, Mr. Rollison." She took it out of a pigeonhole. "Thank you." She smiled brightly, and he turned away. At the other side of the hall, he opened the envelope. Inside was a sheet of hotel paper, and a brief message: "*Room* 422."

He held so many aces, and yet was letting Glebber dictate to him. There was nothing else to do—yet. He went to the lift, worked on the New York principle, and a friendly native boy in a smart uniform took him up to the fourth floor. He didn't know what to expect—except that it would almost certainly be trouble. He couldn't see Glebber taking defeat easily.

He kept his left hand in his pocket, about his gun, and tapped. There was a movement, and hurried footsteps. He drew back a pace, prepared for almost anything, but not prepared for Anson, who stood on the threshold, hands raised as if in astonishment.

Anson drew back, then stretched out a hand and gripped Rollison's wrist. The power in his fingers almost hurt. He was bandaged round the head and neck, and his eyes were bloodshot. He closed and locked the door and leaned against it.

"How the devil did you know where I was?"

"Glebber told me."

"*Glebber* did." Anson caught his breath. "Rollison, that man's the devil. He's got Kath. He told me to wait here until he sent for me. He said he would—would do unspeakable things if I disobeyed. I—I can't imagine why he sent you here."

"Just to show earnest," said Rollison. "Where is he?"

"*I* don't know. I was forced to leave that hotel where you left me. I was brought here by plane and kept at a little place a few miles out, on the Vreeniging road. Kath was there. I've never seen Glebber so—vicious. He had several telephone messages, and after the last, went

storming round as if he'd wipe out anything that got in his way. I tell you I'm terrified of what might happen to Kath."

"Just take it easy," Rollison said. This wasn't what he had expected, Glebber hadn't yet played all his cards—but Glebber did nothing without a purpose, so there was significance in this meeting. "How much more do you know?"

"Nothing. He's got that map. All of it. My half and Mrs. Shein's. He had a photostat of mine all along. Now he'll collar the field—I think really it is a new diamond field, *that's* not a racket. I can't understand what else he wants. Something's holding him back. He'll smash at everyone to get what he's after, nothing will hold him back for long. Have you *any* hope?"

"Just a little," said Rollison. He looked about the room, and saw a communicating door—not locked on this side. He needed little telling what was on the other side of the door—Glebber or Carey, or one of Glebber's men. He smiled faintly as he went nearer, so that anyone could hear what he said without straining unduly.

"Glebber's discovered unexpected weaknesses. He has three. Any one is enough to bring him toppling. I've enough on him to take to the police and make sure he'd see the inside of gaol for the rest of his life. He knows it."

Anson breathed: "No wonder he's mad! Have you taken it to the police?"

"Not yet. I'm prepared to barter it for Kathleen."

Anson gulped.

Rollison said: "What's wrong with that?"

"Nothing," muttered Anson. "Nothing, of course. I'd do anything for Kathleen, she's been so plucky, but—can't you get her free and then use this against Glebber? He's foul. If you can really put him inside——"

Rollison said mildly: "I don't play that way, Charles. If I say I'll do a deal I'll do it—even with Glebber. In any case he's not a man to fool with too much. You ought to know. Was Kath all right when you last saw her?"

"Yes. Scared, but—he hadn't touched her. She's locked

in a room. I was locked in the same room—we were tied up, and couldn't get near each other, but at least we could talk. Do you know what she said, Rollison?" His voice was strained.

"I'm not good at guessing."

"She said she'd rather suffer anything Glebber could do to her than let him get away with anything. She asked me to tell you that if I saw you. I—I could have cried."

"I've offered Glebber a deal," said Rollison. "That sticks."

Anson didn't speak.

Rollison went across to the door and stood looking at it; but the handle didn't turn. He was surprised and disappointed. He turned back, and found Anson staring moodily out of the window; Anson had a trick of doing that. Rollison started to speak.

The telephone bell rang.

Rollison reached it first.

"I am in Room 250," said Glebber. "Come and see me, will you?"

Rollison went out at once, slipped into a telephone booth and telephoned Jolly.

Glebber wore a cream linen suit, which sagged at the shoulders. He looked as if he had gone for nights without any sleep, and the dark bags beneath his eyes were almost black. He was alone. The room was more than a room, it was part of a suite, and much better than the room in which Rollison had seen Anson. Glebber locked the door after Rollison entered, and pointed to a chair. There was a curve at the corners of his lips; almost a smile.

He said: "I have grown to admire you, Rollison."

"Thanks. I wish I could say the same of you."

"We will learn to get along together," said Glebber. "Now! I will lay my cards on the table. You have those lists. The second was left behind in the hurry of our departure. There were two envelopes of about the same

size, and the wrong one was brought away. As you have probably discovered, it contains a complete list of my agents in South Africa. For my own safety's sake I must have the lists. So—in exchange, and your assurance that you will not let the police have a copy, I will deliver Miss Miller unhurt. You already have Anson. More—you can have these."

He put his hand to his pocket and drew out an envelope. He opened this. Inside were two pieces of paper—a map, in two parts. He took them to a table and put them together. Then he looked up into Rollison's eyes. "You are surprised, of course. With that map I can go and find Stein's diamond field. So can you. Oh, it exists. It is worth a fortune."

Rollison picked up the pieces of paper.

The smile still hovered at Glebber's lips.

"Is there anything more you could ask?" Glebber demanded. "The two people's freedom and the map of the diamond field *and* my promise not to interest myself in it further. After all, it is hardly worth it, is it?"

Rollison murmured: "No. I've always thought that. Supposing we have the truth, Gleb?"

"You're shewd," conceded Glebber, and shrugged his narrow shoulders. "No harm can come from telling you, now. I did *not* start all this only because of Stein's discovery. The map was important, but not the most important thing. Some months ago a copy of my list was stolen. It could only have been stolen by Stein. That is why I went after him. He was killed in London, on my instructions, but the list was not found. My agents reported that he had given it to you. The rest you know. Now you have two copies, which are no more use to you than one. I want them both."

"Ah, yes," said Rollison. "So it's a straight exchange—everything I want, for the lists?"

"Yes."

"Nothing else in the deal?"

"No."

"I can't hand over until I've made sure that the girl is all right."

"There are few men I would trust," said Glebber. "You are one of them. You have the Englishman's pride in your word. So I accept those terms. The girl shall be freed first."

He was lying.

Part of what he had said was true, but he couldn't be trusted. And he hadn't yet mentioned Dawn. Rollison watched him closely, and Glebber sat with that faint smile on his lips, looking almost human.

"I see," said Rollison. "What about Dawn Godley?"

"You will release her, of course," said Glebber with a shrug.

"So she's in the deal," said Rollison.

He was surprised that Glebber didn't know where she was; hadn't watched them so closely—or else had not received the news that Dawn was in Johannesburg.

"Yes," said Glebber, "she's in the deal." He laughed suddenly. "Rollison, I hope you haven't any double-dealing in mind. Because if you have, if you try again after we'd concluded this deal, then I shall really strike to kill. You can have Kathleen Miller. None of you will be in danger, once I have those lists. But if I don't get them——" He laughed again, and there was evil in the sound. "I'll use every man I employ to work against you. The girl will suffer, you, your man—everyone. I have great power here, Rollison, don't make any mistake. Before leaving South Africa, I would leave a trail of disaster behind me. Don't make *any* mistake."

Rollison said softly: "There's just one little thing you've forgotten."

"What is it?"

"That I don't trust you, and you don't trust me. You'll take a lot of chances, but you won't chance letting me get away with anything."

"Rollison, I assure you——"

"No dice," said Rollison. "No deal, Gleb. I'll take a chance on finding Kath, but not on letting you run about

loose, doing what you like. You're a bad man and there's only one place for bad men. Simple, isn't it?"

Glebber stood up, slowly and slid his right hand into his pocket. There was no gun there, the pocket was too flat for that; it was habit. His fingers slid inside, and his thumb stayed outside. He was absolutely motionless after that—and the evil blazed in his eyes.

"Too bad, isn't it?" asked Rollison. "Where's Kath, by the way?"

Glebber didn't speak.

"You'll have to come across," said Rollison. "Kath against Dawn. Now we'll really find out what you think of Dawn. She's in a cave on Table Mountain. She's alone. No one else knows that she's there, but the men in the mountain will find out. Not nice for a white woman. Don't you agree?"

Veins were standing out on Glebber's forehead.

"She's very lovely, too," said Rollison. "You don't deserve her. I'll tell you exactly where you can find her. Carey or anyone else you care to send can go and make sure she's all right—as soon as I have Kathleen. I'll make a deal on that. Well?"

Glebber's forehead was shining; he was sweating.

Rollison murmured: "True love never runs smooth, does it?"

"Rollison——" Glebber started, and then choked.

"Everyone told me that you were really fond of Dawn, but I couldn't make myself believe it," said Rollison. "It's nice to have proof. Where's Kathleen?"

Glebber didn't speak, but stood like a statue made of wax that was beginning to melt under intense heat. Sweat now stood out in little beads on his forehead. He looked as if he would collapse, but just stood there.

Rollison felt the tension growing.

"Make up your mind," he said.

"Rollison, if you let her be hurt——"

"Well, well, the man has some human feelings," said Rollison brightly. "There's a little good in the worst of us. I've told you the terms, Gleb. Dawn's lovely to look

at, but she isn't the only beauty in the Cape, and I'm going back to England soon. I should be sorry if anything happened to her, but——" He shrugged his shoulders. "It would be just too bad. I could always blame you, couldn't I? It wouldn't be anything on my conscience."

He stopped.

Glebber seemed to rise on his toes, but until then had been so motionless that Rollison didn't expect what came. The man leapt forward, flashing his hand out of his pocket. There was a knife in it—small, bright, cruel. He moved almost with the speed of light, and his hand rose, with the dagger poised as a weapon. Rollison swerved to one side. The knife came downwards and tore the sleeve of his coat; that was all. He smashed a blow at Glebber's face, as the man was off his balance. The blow landed. Glebber went sprawling, and fetched up on the floor, huddled against a table. The knife fell several inches from his hand. Rollison went across and picked it up.

"Nice little weapon," he said. "But this isn't your day out, Gleb. Where's Kathleen?"

Glebber stared at him, his lips curling back over his teeth. Nothing would make him talk; he would sacrifice Dawn, sacrifice anyone, but he wouldn't talk. Kathleen was his own ace; he meant to hold it.

Rollison said: "All right, Gleb." He went to the door and opened it. Jolly stood outside, with the dog on a tight leash. Rollison took the leash, nodded to Jolly, who went back into the passage. Rollison turned into the room.

The dog growled.

Glebber caught his breath, and terror flooded his eyes.

Chapter XVIII

LAST STRUGGLE

THE door closed behind Rollison.

Glebber sat with his back against the chair, cowering back, with his hands up in front of his face as if to ward off terror. The dog growled as it strained at the leash. Rollison said:

"Stay there, Boy."

He let the leash go, and Glebber drew in a shuddering breath. The dog growled but didn't move. Rollison went to Glebber, grabbed him by the back of his coat collar and hauled him to his feet. The man was shivering violently. Rollison ran through his pockets and made sure that he had no gun or any other weapon. He took him to a chair and let him collapse into it.

Boy growled ferociously.

Rollison said: "He's trained to the minute, Glebber. I'll set him on you, if you don't tell me where I can find Kath Miller."

Glebber muttered: "I can't stand it, I can't stand it. Take him away. Take him away!"

"Attack, Boy!" Rollison snapped.

The dog leapt. Glebber gave a stifled scream, and flung up his hands, but couldn't fend the dog off. It pulled at his arms, then nuzzled his neck, actually gripped—but didn't bite. Glebber made a strangling noise in his throat, and had no colour left. The whites of his eyes showed. Rollison waited for a minute; it seemed a long minute.

"Back, Boy."

The dog growled, let Glebber go and backed away, but didn't go far. It stood within a yard of the terrified man, fangs bared. Rollison kept a poker face as he asked:

"Where's Kathleen?"

Glebber gasped: "She's at a house in Braamfontein, one of the suburbs, I'll give you the address, I——" He gulped, and there was actually foam at his lips. "Twenty-seven, Line Street, Braamfontein. She's all right, no harm will come to her, she's all right."

"She'd better be," said Rollison. "I'm leaving you here with Boy for company until I've found her."

He took a roll of cord from his pocket, bound Glebber's wrists and ankles, and then laid him on the bed. Glebber didn't utter a word, and couldn't keep his eyes off the dog.

"Watch him," Rollison said. "Watch him, Boy."

He went out, and locked the door.

"We'll release Dawn Godley, now," Rollison said, in the passage. "George needn't guard her any longer."

"But, sir——"

"Glebber's caught. We've one more call to make," Rollison said. "I want to know the truth about Dawn Godley, and the only way is to find out what she'll do if she's free to act. As a concession, have George follow her."

Jolly bowed, knowing when argument was useless.

"Oh, Carey will be there and probably some of the others," Rollison said to Jolly a little later. "We'll have to get past them. I don't think it will be difficult." He pulled up in a private hire car, fixed by the hotel, in the wide street where the girl was supposed to be. It was a single-storey house standing in its own grounds—larger than most of the houses here. Two jacaranda trees, superb in their mauve flower, stood in the front garden; the lawn was bright green from recent watering. The house was painted white and looked well kept. No one was about.

Rollison got out.

"You stay here," he said to Jolly. "If I'm not out in ten minutes——"

"Forgive my insistence, sir," said Jolly, "but I suggested at the hotel that it would be better to tell Glebber to send for the girl. It would be much safer. Carey may not believe——"

"I want to look round," Rollison said. "Another experiment, Jolly. As we've let Dawn Godley go, with George to follow her. It'll be interesting to see if she comes here."

Jolly actually shrugged his shoulders resignedly, and stayed at the wheel of the car. Rollison opened the iron gate and strolled up to the stoop. The front door was at one side, and flowers grew in pots near it. All was silent, except for distant traffic. There was no movement in the house; it was almost as if it were empty, and Glebber had lied.

Rollison rang the bell.

Silence followed.

He rang again—and heard footsteps. A man was approaching. Carey? Rollison waited, left hand in his pocket, about his gun; he seldom failed to take that precaution now. The door opened, and Carey appeared. Carey had already seen him, and wasn't surprised, but he was worried. He stood square in the doorway, glowering.

"Good morning," said Rollison brightly. "Nice morning. I've called for Kath Miller."

He stepped forward.

"Stay where you are," Carey snapped. "Where's Glebber?"

"Waiting for me to come back, and nervous of what will happen if I don't have Kath with me, so I shouldn't waste any time." Rollison went forward again, and Carey backed away. It looked almost as if it were going to be easy; too easy. Rollison entered the hall of the house, then realized that both inside and out it looked exactly the same as the house at Oudtshoorn, even to the furniture. A door was open on the right—and he had noticed

the venetian blinds down, at the window of that room, so that no one could see inside. Kathleen might be there; it was the identical room in which she had been at the other house.

He stepped inside.

Kathleen was there.

Kathleen was covering him with a gun.

The shock went through him like a physical blow.

The girl, so fresh and lovely, made up, perfectly dressed, held the gun steadily. It covered his chest. Carey was behind Rollison now, and he didn't need telling that Carey was grinning.

"Quite a shock, Rollison, isn't it?" Carey came up and took the gun from his pocket; there wasn't a thing he could do to prevent it.

"Shock?" Rollison echoed; and lied. "I wouldn't say so, Carey. Kath's interest has been a lot too keen from the beginning. She tried too hard to keep me off the case. Didn't you, Kath?" He was recovering now; and everything Jolly had said came back. Other things came home, which he had seen before without recognizing them. She had been in Glebber's hands for days, and nothing happened to her; it wasn't Glebber's way to wait.

There was more; she had been prepared to sacrifice herself, so she had said, to make sure that Glebber were caught. She'd been intent on convincing Anson of that, hoping that Anson would convince Rollison. In fact she worked with Glebber; had been spying on Rollison.

She'd done it well.

Now she stood covering him with the gun, although Carey had his automatic and there was nothing Rollison could do. He smiled into her lovely face; the loveliness was there, although her eyes held a different expression now, and reminded him of Glebber.

"So you were Glebber's agent on *Die Komeet*," he said sorrowfully. "Poor de Beer will be most upset, you made yourself so popular. Put that plaything away, it might go off."

"It will go off if I want it to," said Kathleen thinly. "Is Glebber still at the hotel?"

"Having a lovely time. A friend of mine is watching over him. Name of Boy. Four-legged. Gleb obviously prefers cats to dogs. Or should I say, prefers vixens?"

"Where is he? Is he still at the Carlton?"

"I just waved my hand and he vanished into thin air," said Rollison brightly. "That's a way I have, it makes things so mystifying."

"So you still think you're clever," she said. "Listen to me, Rollison. I want that list. I also want to know what you've done with Glebber. If you don't tell me the one and give me the other——"

She paused.

"Yes?" inquired Rollison politely.

"I shall shoot you."

"And get hanged. Or don't they hang women in this country?"

"I shan't hang," she said. "I'll tell the police that you were working with Glebber, that I found out, and you tried to get away. You might——"

She broke off again and bit her lips.

Rollison laughed into her face.

"Poor Kath! Quite the villainess, but without the qualifications. What you're really trying to say is that you don't mind Glebber disappearing into gaol or being hanged, and you don't mind the list getting lost, but *you* want to be in the clear. How will you work it, now?" He paused, watching her, his eyes narrowed and his head held back. "This way? Find Glebber, kill Glebber, blame me. Kill me, blame Glebber. Villain unearthed, list found, police clear everything up—or nearly everything. You'd doctor the list. The police would have part of it, but you would still have the main agents, safe and sound. Then you'd work, as Glebber has worked—at all his foul crimes. Right, Kath?"

She sneered: "You can guess sometimes."

"That's hardly guesswork, it's intelligent deduction!

Only you've made an elementary slip. Gleb wouldn't have made it. My man's outside, and——"

"Your man *was* outside," said Kathleen, and tossed back her head and laughed.

The laughter was ugly; and Carey joined in. It wasn't nice to hear. Rollison moved towards the window, and although the two guns covered him, neither was fired. He peered through the slats of the blind. The car was there, but no one sat in it. He could assume that they had found a way to handle Jolly; and he could call himself a fool from now until he died, but wouldn't be able to undo all this.

"Where's that list?" Kathleen demanded.

Rollison turned back from the window.

He could take a chance and jump at them; but the odds were too heavy. There was one chance; and it might not come off. He had played a dangerous game with Dawn Godley; and now she was his one hope. He found himself smiling; and Kath, sweet, lovely Kathleen, spat at him:

"Don't stand there grinning! It's not funny."

"You've never said a truer word," Rollison agreed sadly. "Not funny, not good. What part do you play, Kath? I can see how well you've been used to fool me, and why you managed to get on the staff of a reputable newspaper, but where do you come in with Glebber?"

He needed time, desperately, and if she answered, it would give him a little respite.

She said: "I've been Glebber's second-in-command for a long time—longer than you'd think. *I* told him about you. I warned him. I sent O'Malley for you. You scared him. I killed O'Malley, I hit him over the head with a tire lever. I had two of Anson's servants in my pay, they moved his body into the vat. I had Anson attacked at the vinery. I was showing Glebber just how clever I could be, but he didn't know how clever. He didn't know that his day was coming to an end, anyhow. From the time he picked up Dawn Godley——" She hesitated, and her lips curled; and quite suddenly Rollison understood

more than he had before; much more. It was the old, old story of the woman scorned; and it was never pretty. In this girl it was ugliness itself.

He murmured: "Yes, Kath?"

"I would have run with Glebber. We could have done everything together, but I knew that I couldn't cure him of her. I was only looking for a chance to take over. With Carey. Carey and I will start where Glebber leaves off. You've got it right. You know exactly what I'm going to do. Blame you for Glebber's death, and Glebber for yours. And for your man's—that stuffed dummy who walks around with an umbrella. Now—*where's that list?*"

Rollison said: "Forget it."

"You started off by being a fool and you're still a fool. You can go out quickly and easily, or it can hurt. You may think you're brave, but if Carey gets to work on you, you'll scream for mercy. Where's that list?"

He stood by the wall, looking at her without speaking. She would be as good as her word. "Unspeakable"—and he had been frightened, for fear of what might happen to her! He laughed suddenly, bitterly—and then he saw a movement at the door.

It was the handle, turning.

He kept staring at the girl and knew that both she and Carey were too obsessed with him to watch the door. His heart began to thump, but he showed no sign of what he was feeling.

"Forget it," he repeated.

She cried: "Carey! Shoot him in the arms, then we'll——"

The door burst open.

As it smashed against the wall, Rollison flung himself at the girl. She fired, but he struck her arm before she levelled the gun properly, and the bullet buried itself in the floor. She staggered back, and Rollison snatched her gun. There was other shooting—loud reports, from Carey's gun, and from near the door.

Dawn Godley was there.

George came in, too, an ebony streak, and flew at Carey, head lowered. He butted Carey in the stomach and the man gave way, gasping with pain. Dawn wasn't gasping, but she was hurt; a wound on her neck was bleeding freely. Rollison swung round from Kath and reached the older woman and took her arm.

"Dawn——"

"It's nothing," she said. "Just a scratch."

"You're no judge. Let me look at——"

"It's nothing," she repeated. and there was a glow in her eyes. She looked—happy. He had sensed the quality in her, and it shone more strongly now. "I went to the Carlton. I saw what you'd done to Glebber. He was terrified! I made him tell me where you'd come, and hurried as fast as I could. George followed me—George is good, you're lucky with him." She swayed a little as she spoke, and Rollison knew that she was more hurt than she would say. But she shook his hand off when he tried to make her go towards a chair. "It's all over now."

Rollison said softly: "What is, Dawn?"

"You see," Dawn said, as if she were in a dream, "Glebber killed the only man I really cared for. Sentimental woman, aren't I? I swore I'd break him. It wasn't any use playing at that game. The one way to get Glebber was to pretend to be for him."

There was great compassion in Rollison's eyes.

She went on. "*I* stole that list. The other list. It's in a safe deposit in Cape Town. Glebber thought it was stolen by Stein, and that Stein gave it to you in London before he was killed. As for Kath——" Dawn looked at the girl who was now leaning heavily against a table, unhurt, but with murder in her eyes. Carey was on the floor, groaning and George was standing on duty by the door.

"I always thought she was in the business. She often saw Glebber, and pretended it was to do with her job on the newspaper, but I doubted it. She can fool men—it isn't so easy for a woman to fool a woman. Am I talking in clichés?"

Dawn laughed shrilly.

"You're talking too much. Come and sit down," said Rollison.

She obeyed, and he began to dab the wound in her neck with his handkerchief. It wasn't deep. She was trembling, though, from reaction, not pain.

"Why didn't you tell me earlier, Dawn?"

"How could I, at first? I wasn't sure what you wanted. You might have been as big a rogue as Glebber. Then when I knew the truth I told you I wanted to help, and you—you didn't trust me. I don't blame you. But it's all over now. All over."

"I really believe that Mrs. Godley is right, sir," Jolly said from the door. "It is over—and I have taken the liberty of summoning the police. They have gone to the hotel for Glebber, and I have no doubt that they will soon be here. George released me," Jolly explained, and smiled at George. "I have made sure that Mr. Anson is all right, so there is nothing more to worry about, sir. Except—you really should have some rest. And there is that little wound in your shoulder, you should have that dressed properly. You've only patched it, so far. Do you think I should send for a doctor?" he added, looking at Dawn.

"No!" she cried.

"No," said Rollison. "We'll do everything that's necessary, Jolly."

It was two months before the case was over. Glebber, Carey and Kathleen Miller were sentenced to death; the score of murders proved against them, over the past two years, reached double figures. The case created a sensation in the Union and in England, and hit the headlines in most of the newspapers of the world. Glebber's Union-wide organization was right out of business.

"And now," said Rollison to Jolly, on the afternoon after the trial, "I think we can go home. Enjoyed yourself, Jolly?"

"We have been able to utilize some of the time on see-

ing a most spectacular country," mused Jolly. "I shall always be glad that events brought us here."

"Ah, yes. But what about the people?"

"People, sir?" Jolly smiled thoughtfully. "I am very glad that you have managed to get George a safe job, he fully deserves it. As for the rest—if you are asking me what I think will transpire between Mr. Anson and Mrs. Godley, I would rather not venture an opinion. You may be right, and they will——"

Rollison interrupted: "They'll make a match of it. Anson's over the reckless stage, and will be busy with this diamond field up in the back of beyond. He's settled with Mrs. Stein, who'll have her proper share but take no active interest. Mrs. Godley will go with Anson. Do you know," added Rollison, "we haven't taken the trouble to find out exactly where the field is. Might be worth going up and prospecting nearby. What do you feel?"

"I should be happier on board a ship returning home, sir."

"Would you?" asked Rollison. He turned to the window and looked over Table Mountain, in the light of the setting sun. "I don't know, Jolly. But we'll go back and find out."

"I have a provisional booking for accommodation on a ship leaving next week, sir."

"Oh, have you," said Rollison heavily.

The newspapers were at the ship in force to see them off. So was George. So was Anson. They talked on deck, and Rollison kept looking towards the dockside, expecting to see Dawn Godley, and being disappointed. He had taken it for granted that she would come. It wanted half an hour to sailing time, and the ship was already being cleared of visitors.

He heard her voice suddenly, at his ear, and looked round, heart leaping.

"Hallo! How did you come aboard?"

"I've been here for some time," she said. "I've never liked good-byes, and I think they ought to be cut as short

as they can be." Her eyes were smiling as she looked at Rollison—and then she turned and held both hands out to Anson. "Well, Charles. I'll be back. You can be sure I'm coming back."

Rollison exclaimed: "Do you mean you're sailing *with* us?"

"Charles is sure I need a holiday," Dawn said. "He has some business in London and wants me to look after it, while he goes up and gets started on the diamond field."

"That's right," said Anson, and gave Rollison the impression that the words choked him. "Come back, Dawn —if you really feel you want to." He held her hands tightly, and then drew her close, kissed her and turned and hurried away.

Soon he and George were waving from the dockside.

"This is going to be some voyage," said Rollison to Jolly. "Looking forward to it?"

"Very much indeed, sir," said Jolly. "I don't see how you can do anything more dangerous than play deck-games."

Three months later Rollison saw Dawn off at the London airport. She was flying back, and Anson would be waiting for her. They were to be married in Cape Town, and would then go up to the diamond field together. A rough life, but——

"I'm longing for it," she said. "Richard, you've been wonderful to me while I've been in London, but the thing I'm really grateful for is what you did in South Africa."

"What *I* did!" Rollison scoffed. "What you did, my Dawn." He pressed her hands and kissed her lightly. "For the bride," he added, and then gaiety sprang to his eyes and he kissed her fully on the lips. "Don't tell Charles!"

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